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SOUTH CHURCH LECTURES:

DISCOURSES UPON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

DELIVERED IN THE SOUTH BAPTIST CHURCH, NEW YORK, ON
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THE Discourses embraced in this volume were prepared at the request of the Pastor of the Church in which they were delivered. It was thought that such a series, on doctrinal subjects, presented by clergymen of several denominations, could not fail to do good. The experiment was eminently successful and satisfactory. After some unavoidable delay, these Sermons are now presented to the Public.



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Christian Doctrine: its Unity in
Christ.

BY THE

REV. WM. ADAMS, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE MADISON SQUARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK.



I.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplyeth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."—EPHES. iv. 13-16.

"THE intuition of unity is the end of all philosophy."* The last comprehensive induction of the human reason is *God*, for "of him, and through him, and to him are all things."†

When we ask, what are we to believe concerning God and our relations to him, we have, for an answer, the Christian Revelation.

What is Christianity? This is the question of our times, and of all times. We answer, "That assemblage of facts and doctrines which pertain to the person of Jesus Christ." This statement implies a systematic arrangement

* Lord Bacon.

† Rom. xi. 36.

of ideas and objects about a central idea and object. By a system we intend a collection of truths or facts related together by mutual dependence. Every theological system, consciously or unconsciously, has some one central thought or fact, which shapes and controls and adjusts all others in regard to itself. Our first study should be to ascertain and fix this ultimate and controlling principle. What is this central force of the Christian system? If we err in the conception and statement of this, we are certain to be mistaken in regard to the several and distinctive parts. If we are at fault in respect to the heart and life of the system, it is not possible for the distinctive parts to be otherwise than disproportioned and dislocated.

Now Christian theology demands for itself the treatment which we bestow on all other systematic sciences; namely, that we should study the system itself. Not that we should bring to it a conception—an hypothesis of our own—and endeavor to collate all ideas and facts about this, accepting or rejecting them, according as we can make out the correspondency. This has been the grand error of multitudes. They have taken some law of nature, or

some principle of philosophy, some rule of ethics, or some assertion of the will of man for their ultimate fact, to which they have undertaken to conform and adjust all things. The Ptolemaic system of astronomy was a mistake resulting from an erroneous hypothesis,—the motionless stability of the earth,—for its central fact. If we would understand astronomy, we must study astronomy. If we would understand the science of chemistry, we must study chemistry. Christianity demands no less of us than this; if we would understand it aright, we must not bring to it our will, our ethics, our philosophy, but set ourselves to ascertain its own facts and relations.

The question recurs, what is the central principle of the Christian system? *The personality of the Being who, as its founder, gave Christianity its name.* Christ, the living Christ. That Being who is unlike every other being within the whole scope of our knowledge; who is God; who is man; the manifestation of divinity; the restorer of humanity; the world's Creator, and the world's Redeemer; the author of life, the conqueror of death; the royal Head of an everlasting kingdom, and the meek pattern of patience under shame and suffering; the Son of God and the

son of Mary ; having a glory with the Supreme before the worlds were made, yet born of a woman and laid in a manger ; tasting death upon the cross, dying once but dying no more forever ; living once, and alive forever, the Head, the Saviour, the Lord, the Life, the King of the human race. This is the being who forms the radiant centre of the Christian system. Here have we a complete organism, and Christ is the very heart and life of it. Many things are revealed for our belief and our practice, but they all proceed from and return to Jesus Christ, to find and prove their complete unity in his immortal personality. There is not a truth, not a fact in the universe which is not related to this centrality in Christ. The importance of every truth and every fact is to be measured by its nearness or remoteness as related to him who is the sum of the whole. The Holy Scriptures make much of the "proportion of faith," this adjustment of parts to the solar centre. "The whole body is fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." We are instructed how we may all come into the "*unity* of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God." Moreover, we are cautioned that without

this peculiar knowledge which gives unity to the whole system, we are like a vessel struck by sudden squalls, in danger of being driven from our course, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every kind of doctrine. It is only as we are possessed of some comprehension of this complete and systematic relation of all revealed truth, in its oneness, that we are safe from the infidel objections which are suggested by the "sleight of man," and their "cunning craftiness." A very meagre conception of Christianity is that which is confined within the narrow space measured from the birth at Bethlehem to the crucifixion on Calvary. That space is only the centralizing of all events preceding and subsequent, even as the out-spreading rays of the sun are gathered, by a small lens, into one focus. Of him who there was born and there was buried, "are ALL THINGS, and we in him." Everything which we are to believe, to know, to practice ; all which pertains to God and to man ; all of the least importance concerning other worlds, and other orders of beings ; all history from the beginning of time ; all prospect and expectation of the future till time shall be no more ; all that by any possibility we can know concerning eter-

nal retributions, when this world has disappeared from its present place and uses ; all arts, all sciences, all discoveries, inventions and achievements, wars, revolutions, governments, if they be anything, are related to Him *for* whom all things were made, and *by* whom all things consist, in their diversity, their totality, and their unity. Be sure of this ; when the converted scholar of Tarsus determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, he restricted himself to no mean and narrow bounds ; for he placed himself at that focal centre, where he could command every radius in the vast infinity of knowledge.

Placing ourselves at the same point, we are in a condition to acquire the *true knowledge of God*. There is *a* knowledge of God which is acquired from nature ; but the right and complete knowledge of the Creator is acquired only through the Christian Revelation. Natural theology, with its deductions concerning a supreme and intelligent authorship of the world, is presupposed and assumed by the Christian economy. The inspired Scriptures do not demonstrate the existence of God, but more than this, they imply it as a primal and ultimate fact. This fact

is the outer circle, within which is that concentric revelation of Jesus Christ, which reflects a resplendent light on the mode of the divine existence and the attributes of God.

How are we to satisfy ourselves on this grand article of belief, the character of the Supreme? Shall we follow the pantheistic logicians, and endeavor to fabricate an ideal form to which we give the name of God, the embodiment of certain thoughts of our own, the deduction of consequential reasonings? The spider's threads will not hold the bulky ship to her anchorage, and we need a belief in God which is more than the fabric and reflection of ourselves. Shall we study God in nature? Shall we feel after him, if haply we may detect him amid the mysteries of Providence? To none of these methods are we restricted. "*God in Christ*" is the object of our faith and our adoration. Standing at this Christian centre, the personality of Jesus, we have a resplendent light reflected on the being and character of God which satisfies all the conditions of our complex nature. Here do we learn, for the first time, the Christian doctrine concerning the mode of the divine existence, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The

reality of these distinctions in the Godhead is a necessary inference from the divine personality of Christ as our point of departure. To start, as many have done, with the being of the Supreme as a lofty abstraction, appealing only to nature and reason for grounds of belief concerning the mode of that existence, is the certain method of involving oneself in inexplicable intricacies. It is only as we acknowledge the manifestation of God in the person and work of his Son to be the real centre of the Christian economy, in distinction from all other forms of religion, that we are in a position to study upward the unfolding glories of the Godhead. There is nothing abstract or barren in the theology which has Jesus Christ for its centre; for all the knowledge which we have acquired concerning the God who holds our destiny, is pervaded with the life and warmth and reality of our own redemption. What do we know, what can we know, of the great mystery of Godliness, the Holy Trinity, save as it is revealed to us in connection with the redemption of the human race through the incarnation? In the effulgence of this central light, we are in a condition to study and adore the attributes of God, like

that of the apocalyptic angel standing in the sun.

The *love* of God,—we were in despair if this could not be demonstrated,—is no longer an inference from the marks of benevolent design which greet us in the structure of his works. There are many shadows, many inexplicable mysteries, when, without the Christian revelation, we undertake to satisfy ourselves of the divine goodness from natural arrangements. But God in Christ leaves not a shadow of doubt as to his unalloyed and infinite benignity. GOD IS LOVE, is the doctrine which burns and brightens in the central sun of the Christian economy. “Good will to man,” was the voice from the sky which announced to the world the birth of Christ. Moses, from the cleft of the rock, where a divine hand had placed him, was allowed but a glimpse of the glory of the Ineffable One; but we, admitted through Christian faith, the new and living way, into the sublime arcanum of a life hid with Christ in God, have a discernment of God’s own heart, when we know that he so loved us as to give his only begotten Son to die for us. The divine love is no longer an abstract inference, but a warm, radiant, and glowing reality.

We confine ourselves now to bare hints and suggestions, which we would advise all to follow out in their studies and reflections; but there is no way to acquire a true knowledge of all the attributes of our Maker—his wisdom, his justice, his power, his truth—but in connection with this central fact of the Christian redemption.

What is the *wisdom* displayed in the mechanical arrangement of the universe, compared with the manifestation of the same quality which is made, to the admiration of principalities and powers in heavenly places, in the adjusting of means to ends in the administration of impartial justice, and the exercise of universal mercy in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? The *power* which summoned the world into existence, and fitted it up with beauties and wonders for man's convenience, and which received its highest attestation in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; this physical omnipotence is only the accompaniment of that spiritual power, which governs spirits, good and bad, in all their ascending and descending orders, and which makes its highest display in the recovery of alienated minds, armed with the terrific power

of a perverted free-agency, by a method and force which impinges not the least on their absolute liberty.

So of all the doctrines which pertain to God, his purposes, and his decrees. Theological systems there have been, and there are, which make the *sovereignty of God* their basis, centre, and heart. Believing in God, and reasoning consistently, we can not avoid the conclusion, that there is a system of things, upborn and guided by the agency and government of the Almighty ; but it is only when we are informed in the Christian revelation what this system is ; even the purpose of God, before the foundation of the world was laid, to make it the theatre of redeeming love, that God's sovereign decrees are taken out of all association with fatalistic necessity, and made to glow with a most celestial joy. Would it comfort our rational souls to be assured that this world and its affairs were drifting along without plan or purpose ; that redemption was an after-thought, an improvised expedient gotten up of necessity to remedy an unforeseen accident ? Does it not comfort every rational soul, taking its position by the side of the Son of God, looking backward and looking upward, to be informed

that the one purpose, which includes every other pertaining to our race, is that which, according to his good pleasure, God hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in him ; having predestinated us according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory, who trusted and hoped in Christ? A thoughtful nature can not shrink from those absorbing inquiries which relate to the harmonies of divine intentions with the unquestionable facts of self-science ; but the whole history of moral philosophy demonstrates that no man is safe in approaching the brink of this great ocean, except as he is led by the hand of Christ ; then this great and wide sea is calm, and the outlook on its length and breadth and depth is cheerful, and the soul trusts, and adores, and loves, but does not sink ; for Christ, the living, loving Saviour of the soul is the centre about which all the purposes and decrees of God in regard to our race and world revolve, and whatever else we doubt or ponder in vain, this is clear and indu-

bitable, that God would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For a practical theologic use, what better definition can be given of God's eternal and sovereign decrees, than this—Christianity no accident, no incident, but God's original plan? and sovereign election, so often conceived and presented as a philosophical abstraction, by which many are chilled and repelled, what is it, in fact, but this blessed and most comforting assurance, that Christianity will be no failure or disappointment; that its success depends on no contingency, but is made certain by the very love from which it drew its origin?

From the same centre we move in another direction, and we have the *true doctrine concerning man*. How many theories there have been concerning humanity, its original qualities, its present condition and capacities, its future promise and destiny. No age has been more prolific in them than our own. It is hard to fix upon any doctrine concerning man which will cover all the facts of his history, if we start from any other point than the personal Christ. Some would have us to believe that man, in his origin, was created a grub, a kinsman to the ape, and

along this "geological spiritualism," he has been working his way, by necessary laws, upward and onward towards an indefinite perfectibility ; he of Nazareth being nothing more than the natural development of humanity, the religious Psyche, the blossoming of the race, the consummation of a long and germinant growth. The mournful condition of the human race at the present hour does not correspond with this theory. It would be a tremendous tax on our credulity to hold the hideous idea that man, as we see and know him to-day, is as good, or even better than when he came from his Creator's hand. We are lost in our speculations concerning man's glory and man's shame, except we take the Christ of the Gospel as the point from which we start. Inquiring why Christ came into the world, and taught that it was for this end, to save sinners, we are initiated on the instant into the true doctrine concerning our own nature. The glorious original of man, the son of God, pure, joyous, immortal, the image of his Maker ; man an apostate from this high estate, his capacities undestroyed, his goodness dimmed, his soul grand and immortal still, but that very grandeur and immortality made a curse by sin ; hope, blasted

by conscious guilt, revived by the priesthood of Christ; a new life imparted to the disabled spirit through the blessedness of divine mercy; that which the weakness of human flesh never could accomplish of itself made certain by our alliance with Christ; and this degenerate and prostrate nature of ours, in Christ elevated above the angels, and promised a security from which there shall be no other falling; here, in Christ and his cross have we the universal solvent, which touches and includes every real fact in man's eventful life. You cannot have a cold, lifeless, or false theory concerning man, so long as you study man in Christ; His advent, His atonement, His resurrection, His redemptive work. There is not a belief, a duty, a command, a promise, a hope belonging to man, which does not range itself in proper place and order around this central fact, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Learning here at what a costly sacrifice man was redeemed, we are struck as no where else with the shame and sadness and woe of his fall; taught at the same time to what heights he is raised by the power and grace of the Redeemer, we see the true greatness and glory of our nature, surpassing all

that ever was conceived by an infidel pride and ambition. God in Christ, God's greatness in condescension. Man in Christ, man's greatness in being recovered. Recovery implies penitence, forgiveness, new obedience, progressive sanctification, the law of the spirit of life, a heaven of holiness and blessedness, and fearless security. Here is the force which contains the promise concerning the future of the human race on earth, in the blessed kingdom of Christ; and this the only sure word of hope concerning that grander and nobler future beyond the resurrection of the body, and the judgment day, in that imperial result of which we can only say, that it will be the complete compensation and satisfaction of the soul of Christ. Fallen man, man sad and despairing, redeemed, justified, adopted, regenerated, sanctified, reformed, recovered, saved, glorified: this is the epitome of all human history, need, capacity and hope. Luther was wont to say that there is a "vast amount of religious science in the particles of the New Testament." Indeed, there is. *By Him, for Him, in Him, through Him, of Him, and to Him* are all things.

Turning from this system of theological truth

to the Book in which it is all contained, we are filled with wonder at the world's intellectual marvel. The Bible is a self-evidenced miracle ; and the miracle consists in this, that a book, the composition of which occupied more than fifteen centuries of time, prepared by different hands and minds, with no possibility of collusion, and differing each from the other so much as Moses and John, Samuel and Peter, Solomon and Paul, Ezekiel and Luke, David and James, each preparing and shaping his appropriate work, and that work of each as distinct from every other, as the book of Genesis and the Apocalypse, the Psalms and the Acts of the Apostle, the book of Ruth and the argument in the epistle to the Romans, the prophecies of Isaiah and the letters of the disciple whom Jesus loved ; that in all this vast variety of material, history, ritual, description, genealogy, law, proverb, prophecy, ode, apothegm, precept, fact, doctrine, apology, reasoning, there should be as complete a unity of subject, the whole compacted and framed together into one book, and that having but one theme, as if it had been composed in the lifetime of one man, and by his own many-sided and varied faculties. And that which alone

gives unity to this far-stretching and varied material is Jesus Christ and his salvation. There are many even in this late period of time, who have not understood this structure of the Bible, and so are in constant danger of lapsing into infidelity, because they have not come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. You have heard the pickings of the pry, and the raspings of the file, by which so many have been working to destroy faith in the inspiration of the Pentateuch, and detach our belief from the divine origin of the Levitical system. It might not occur to you at first, how far this involved a loss of faith in the doctrine of Christ as revealed in the New Testament. Once allow that the religion of the Hebrew nation was of human origin, to be classed with other religions invented and used by man; or allow that it was a religion sanctioned of God, but having no connection with the religion which we have been taught in the New Testament to believe was the only one given under heaven whereby men could be saved, and you have lost your hold on the one only Redeemer of the world, and are put on the tiptoe of expectation for other religions. Our belief is, that from the

utterance of the gracious *promise* which was made to our fallen progenitors after Eden was forfeited, to the present time, and still extending itself down the ages of the future, there has been, there is, and there will be only one religion ordained of God, and the centre of that is Jesus Christ. The book of Leviticus in the Old Testament, and the epistle to the Hebrews in the New, are clamped together across the gulf of centuries, pillars upbearing one compact and solid arch. He who has come, in what is called the progress of thought, to regard the appurtenances of the Hebrew tabernacle as the trumpery which drifts naturally to the "limbo of vanity," strikes at the foundation of Christian faith, and does dishonor to the Saviour of the world. Considering the deep debasement of the human race, in which the knowledge of the true God had died out, the system of Levitical worship was not only one method of reviving that knowledge in its best aspects, but, so far as we can make it out, it was the *only* method by which there was any possibility of imparting to apostate humanity those lost ideas of God's purity and justice, and those new ideas of God's mercy and redemption,

which were to be the only prop and hope of the race. There were no words in human language to represent such ideas, because the ideas themselves were wanting; and to create them it was needful that corresponding things should be presented to the senses; and so the Levitical ritual enacted before the eye, its expressive promise of the coming Restorer. The unity of the human race is not broken by several and different modes of salvation. Abraham was not saved without Christ, and Paul only saved in Christ. Moses and Elias appeared on the top of Tabor, talking with our Lord concerning the death he was soon to accomplish at Jerusalem. Deep answers to deep across intervening ages; and there is but one voice; "the spirit of Jesus is the testimony of prophecy;" all times and all events converge in one truth, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." He who does not comprehend this structure of the book of God in the unity of Jesus Christ his Son, will never reach himself the compactness and strength of a perfect Christian man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. -

There is still another aspect of our theme, too

grand to be presented in the closing paragraph of a single discourse. One sentence as a hint is all which we can now give it. We have had books on the philosophy of history, and books of history without philosophy at all; events thrown together, unrelated, like those jumbled in old almanacs. This world being made *by* Christ, and *for* Christ, has turned, and waited, and changed with reference to his advent who is the "Desire of all nations," and it will turn, and wait, and change with reference to the extension of that kingdom of the Son of God, which, ere time shall end, will embrace all tribes and kindreds, and convert this valley of the shadow of death into a reflection and copy of the rejoicing heavens. So shall the ultimate design of Creation and Redemption be accomplished, and the glory of the Lord fill heaven and earth.

ALL THINGS IN HIM, AND WE IN HIM. There is but one question of indispensable importance. Are we in Christ in that sense which secures for us all which is of any consequence in this world and in the world to come? We hail the season which celebrates the birth of the Redeemer; we greet each other with happy wishes on that joyous day; whether we are wise will depend on

this : have we come to that unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God which enables us to estimate all things as related to him and his kingdom ? Whether we are happy in the true sense of the term, blessed in life, blessed in death, and blessed forever more in the fruition of God, depends wholly on this, and nothing but this : are we joined together and compacted together as members to the Head, indissoluble parts of our living and immortal Redeemer ? Vain, utterly vain is the attempt to compress and confine Jesus Christ within the limits of creeds, catechisms, Sabbath days, Christmas, funerals, and the routine of what men call religions. He is the LIFE OF THE WORLD, the centre, circumference, and law of all things. May God grant us that knowledge of his Son which is Eternal Life.

The Bondage of Sin.

BY THE

William Greenough Thayer, &c.
REV. W. G. T. SHEDD, D.D.,

BRICK CHURCH, NEW YORK.



II.

"Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him."—JOHN, vi. 43, 44.

THE doctrine of the sinner's inability to change his own heart is distinctly and frequently taught in the Scriptures. Says the prophet Jeremiah: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." Says the apostle Paul: "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to

do of his good pleasure. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." Says our Lord Jesus Christ: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of the Father. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me, ye can do nothing. No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him." In accordance with these and other passages of similar import, the Assembly of Divines, who drew up those doctrinal statements which are so widely accepted as an accurate digest of Biblical truth, affirm that "man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself or to prepare himself thereunto."

The doctrine, thus taught in the Scriptures and reaffirmed in the Symbol, is a deep one, and, like most deep truths, a very practical one. False views respecting man's power to originate and mature a religious character will affect the

entire experience and the eternal destiny. Perhaps there is no one question that is more searching and far-reaching than the inquiry: "What think ye of man's natural unassisted endowments? How much power has a sinful man over his own will and affections?" The answer to this question immediately locates the person, and determines the general current of his opinions respecting sin and grace; respecting human apostasy and human redemption. Profound, therefore, as the subject is, and deeply as it runs into the mysteries of the human constitution, it is at the same time intensely practical, and bears directly upon the duty and destiny of the soul.

I. In the text, our Redeemer explicitly affirms that no man can come unto God the Son, except God the Father draw him. The Jews murmured at the saying, and he then repeats it once more, with a positiveness and a commanding dignity that admits of no gainsaying: "Therefore said I unto you, than no man can (*δύναται*) come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." Let us, in the first place, consider the *origin* and *nature* of this spiritual impotence; this inability of a sinner, "by his own strength, to convert himself or to prepare himself thereunto."

The origin of this helplessness lies not in creation, but in sin. "Whosoever committeth *sin* is the slave of sin," says Christ. "I am carnal, sold under *sin*," says St. Paul. "Man, by his fall into a state of *sin*, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good," says the Catechism. By creation, man lay under no such impotence to keep the divine law. It is the consequence of apostasy, and apostasy was purely the work of the creature. In all our practical thought, as well as in all our speculation upon this difficult subject, we must ever keep in mind that man's present inability to perfectly obey the law of God was not imposed upon him by the creative power of his Maker and Judge. God made man upright; and, "in his state of innocency, he had freedom and power to will and to do that which is well pleasing to God." This present bondage and helplessness of the human will constituted no part of that original righteousness with which man was primarily endowed; but it is an integral part of that original sin which he introduced by a responsible act of apostasy and rebellion. No man, therefore, can excuse himself from an obligation to perfectly keep the divine law, by charging his present impotence upon his

Maker. It originated this side of that great creative act whereby man was made in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. God can, therefore, justly require of every human being all that he originally endowed him with, together with a perfect use and development of the endowment. He can demand of every rational soul the ten talents, or the five talents, which he originally committed to it, together with a diligent and faithful improvement of them. Because man, by an abuse of free agency, and in direct opposition to the command of God, has maimed, mutilated, and ruined the fine powers with which he was originally furnished, does this excuse him from a full performance of all that those powers were originally capable of? Could the servant in the parable plead, that having lost the five talents, or the ten talents, therefore he was discharged from the obligation laid upon him by his lord to return every one of them with usury? Does the bankrupt cease to be a debtor by losing his property? Because apostate man now finds it impossible to render that perfect obedience which he could and did render in the original condition in which God made him, is he, therefore, no longer under obligation to render

it? God created man with plenary power to perfectly obey the moral law, and therefore no change which man makes in himself can affect the primary and eternal obligation that was founded upon the original and perfect endowment.

But the nature of this bondage of the sinner will become yet more apparent if we look a little more narrowly into the tendency and influence of sin itself. We need not go away from our own hearts and wills, in order to find out how it is, and why it is, that we cannot come unto Christ except the Father draw us. We need not ascend into the heavens, or descend into the deep, to discover the key to the problem: the word is nigh us, in our mouth, and in our heart.

The apostle Peter, speaking of the influence of corrupting and licentious men, who have "eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin," remarks, that while they promise their dupes "liberty, they themselves are the servants (slaves) of corruption; for *of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.*" This latter clause explains how it is that an un-renewed man is unable perfectly to keep the law of God, and unable to change his own heart.

Sin contains in itself the element of servitude. In the very act of transgressing the law of God, there is a *reflex* action of the human will upon itself, whereby it becomes less able than before to keep that law. Sin is the suicidal action of the human will. To do wrong destroys the power to do right. We see this in everyday life, and in hundreds of examples before our very eyes. Hear the following wail and lament from the lips of one of the most genial of English writers, in which he confesses in a way not to be mistaken, that "whosoever committeth sin is the *slave* of sin." "The waters have gone over me. But out of the black depths, could I be heard, I would cry out to all those who have set a foot in the perilous flood. Could the youth, to whom the flavor of the first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life, or the entering upon some newly-discovered paradise, look into my desolation, and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when he shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will; *to see his destruction, and have no power to stop it, and yet feel it all the way emanating from himself*; could he see my fevered eye, feverish with the last night's drinking, and

feverishly looking for to-night's repetition of the folly ; could he but feel the body of the death out of which I cry hourly with *feebler* outcry to be delivered, it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth, in all the pride of its mantling temptation."

The effect of a vicious habit in diminishing a man's ability to resist temptation is proverbial. But what is habit but a constant repetition of free agency, of wrong decisions, every single one of which *reacts* upon the will that made them, and renders it less strong and less energetic to do the contrary. Has the old debauchee, just tottering into hell, as much power of active resistance against the vice which has now ruined him, as the youth has who is just beginning to run that awful career ?* Can any creature do a

* "The sophism that ruined me," says *Rousseau* (*Confessions*, Book II.), "was precisely that into which the generality of persons fall who lament the lack of resolution, when it is already too late to exercise it. It is our own fault that uprightness is difficult ; and, were we but always prudent, we should rarely have occasion for the virtue of prudence. But propensities that are easily surmounted lead us unresistingly on ; we yield to temptations so trivial that we despise their danger. And so we insensibly fall into perilous situations, from which we might easily have preserved ourselves, but from which we now find it impossible to extricate ourselves

wrong act, and be as sound in his will, and as spiritually strong after it, as he was before it? Did that abuse of free agency by Adam, whereby the sin of the race was called into existence, leave the agent as it found him,—uninjured and undebilitated in his voluntary power?

The truth and fact of the case is, that sin, in and by its own nature and operations, tends to destroy all virtuous force, all holy energy, in any moral agent. The excess of will to sin is the same as the defect of will to holiness. The degree of intensity with which any being loves and inclines to evil, is the measure of the amount of power to good which he has thereby lost. And if, as is the case with man, the intensity be total, then the loss is entire. Total depravity carries with it total impotence and helplessness. The more carefully we observe the workings of our own wills, the surer will be our conviction that they can ruin themselves. We shall indeed find

without efforts so superhuman as to terrify us, and we finally fall into the abyss, saying to the Almighty, 'Why hast thou made me so weak?' But, notwithstanding our vain pretext, He addresses our conscience, saying, '*I have made thee too weak to rise from the pit, because I made thee strong enough not to fall therein.*'" This is solemn and awful truth from an unwonted source.

that they cannot be forced or ruined from the outside. But if we watch the influence upon the *will itself*, of its own wrong decisions, and its own yielding to temptations, we shall discover that the voluntary faculty may be ruined from within ; may be made impotent to holiness by its own action ; may surrender itself to appetite and selfishness with such an intensity and entireness that it becomes unable to convert itself, and overcome its own wrong inclination. And yet there is no extraneous compulsion, from first to last, in the process. The man follows himself. He pursues his own inclination. He has his own way, and does as he pleases. He loves what he inclines to love, and hates what he inclines to hate. Neither God, nor the world, nor Satan himself, force him to do wrong. It is the most spontaneous of self-motion. But self-motion has *consequences* as much as any other motion. Because sin is a free act, it does not follow that it has no results, and leaves the will precisely as it found it. It is strictly true that man was not compelled to apostatize ; but it is equally true, that if of his own will he did apostatize, he could not then and afterwards be as he was before. He would lose knowledge ; his understanding would

become darkened. And he would lose spiritual power; his will would become impotent to holiness. The bondage of which Christ speaks, when he says, "Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin," is a consequence within the soul itself of an unforced act of self-will, and therefore this bondage is as truly guilt as any other result or product of self-will; it is as truly guilt as mental blindness, mental hardness, or any other of the qualities of sin. Whatever springs from will, we are responsible for. The drunkard's bondage issues from his own inclination, from his own self-indulgence; and therefore the bondage is no palliation of his vice. And man's inability to love God supremely results from his own self-will, from his own self-love; and therefore his impotence is a part of his sin, and not an excuse for it.*

* The following train of reasoning is from *Samuel Hopkins*, a divine who upon some points deviates from the historical Calvinism, but not upon the point of the sinner's inability. "It is certain," he says (Works I. 233-235, Congregational Board's Ed.), "that every degree of inclination contrary to duty, which is and must be sinful, implies and involves an equal degree of difficulty and inability to obey. For, indeed, such inclination of the heart to disobey, and the difficulty or inability to obey, are precisely one and the same. This kind of difficulty, or inability, therefore, always is great according to the strength and fixedness of the inclination to

II. Such being the origin and nature of the sinner's inability, we pass now to consider some of the *duties* which press upon him in view of it. For this doctrine, instead of being, as some suppose, a motive for sleep and inaction, affords the strongest reasons for mental concern and activity. If the apostate human soul had plenary power to deliver itself from sin, there would be no need

disobey; and it becomes *total* and *absolute* [inability] when the heart is totally corrupt, and wholly opposed to obedience.

This leads us to observe that the Holy Scriptures speak frequently of this kind of inability, or want of power to do good, and always represent it as inexcusable and blameable. Our Saviour said, 'No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and yet apparently [evidently] blamed the Jews for rejecting, and not coming to him, and said to them, 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.' From whence it appears that the cannot—the inability mankind are under to come to him—is precisely the same thing with their unwillingness, or opposition of heart, to come to him, as the matter has been stated above. Nothing but the opposition of the heart or will of man to coming to Christ, is or can be in the way of his coming. So long as this continues, and his heart is wholly opposed to Christ, he *cannot* come to him; *it is impossible, and will continue so, until his unwillingness, his opposition to coming to Christ, be removed by a change and renovation of his heart, by divine grace, and he be made willing in the day of God's power.* And yet this inability and impossibility to come to Christ, consisting wholly in the opposition of his will or heart to Christ, is the man's own sin, and he is crim-

of any anxiety. It might take its own time and way to do it. But if it cannot save itself, this is the very reason why it should look around and see if there be not salvation from some other quarter. Even the pagan, who felt the bondage of corruption, and knew that there is no power in human nature to redeem itself, did not altogether despair. Plato tells us, that he thinks

inal in proportion to the degree of his inability, or strength and fixedness of the opposition of his heart to Christ. This kind of inability, therefore, is so far from being an excuse for not coming to Christ, that it is in its own nature criminal, being nothing but sin—a strong, fixed opposition of heart to that which is most reasonable and right. *No man can act contrary to his present inclination and choice.* But who ever imagined that this rendered his inclination and choice innocent and blameless, however wrong and unreasonable it might be.

St. Paul says: 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' None can think the apostle means to excuse man's enmity against God, because it renders him unable to obey the law of God, and cannot be subject to it. The contrary is strongly expressed, namely, that the enmity against God is exceedingly criminal, in that it is directly opposed to God and his law, and involves in its nature *an utter inability to obey the law of God,—yea, an absolute impossibility.*" This writer's argument for inability may be concisely stated thus: Inclination to disobey is inability to obey. Total inclination to disobey is total inability to obey. But inclination is voluntariness.

there must appear, in some age or another, a Deliverer. How much less, then, should man despair when living under the light of revelation, and knowing that the "Desire of all nations" has appeared, mighty to save, not the powerful, but the helpless.

1. The first duty incumbent upon the helpless sinner is, *to become conscious of his helplessness*. This impotence to all good can be very readily discovered by any man. Let him attempt to become good, let him try for one single day to perfectly keep the law of God, and he will find out how weak he is. Man, for instance, is obligated to cherish no feeling that is not a holy one. Let him see if he can go through twenty-four hours of solar time, without a single selfish, sinful, feeling. Man is obligated to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Let him endeavor to obey this injunction for a week or a month, and he will realize how helpless he is, and how much he needs the aid of a Being who searches the heart, and knows the thoughts of the children of men, and has control over them. If the sinner will in good earnest begin to make a draft upon his own resources, he will very soon find out how much he has to draw

upon. And the discovery will humble him. It will throw him upon his knees. It will press from him the cry: "Lord, help, or I perish." Thus it was with the great apostle to the Gentiles,—a man of more energy and of more natural force than belongs to the majority of mankind. When St. Paul was awakened by the law of God, he began to make a draught upon his power to be holy as God is holy, and cried out: "How to perform that which is good I find not. O wretched man, who shall deliver me." He strove with all the moral force that he was possessed of, to turn straight about and love God supremely, instead of himself; but there was no starting-point in his sinful soul. He could not make a *beginning* in this direction. Perhaps, if he could have generated the dim beginnings of love and new obedience, he might have gone forward. But the *whole* head was sick, the *whole* heart was faint, the *whole* will was preoccupied; and thus he discovered, what he was not aware of until he tried to keep the whole law, that he was in bondage to sin. "I was once alive without the law," he tells us, "but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." He was without strength, like a dead man.

This, then, is the first duty incumbent upon the unrenewed man. He is to become aware of the fact that he is so sinful at heart that he cannot change his heart. The instant he acquires some *experience* of this truth, he begins to assume a more hopeful position ; but so long as he has no experimental knowledge upon this point, there is no hope for him. When we urge upon a careless person,—a man with no sense of bondage to sin,—the claims of God's law and his duty to love God supremely, he tells us that he cannot, and asks us why we bid the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots. Now, if we could only make this thoughtless man *feel the truth* of what he says, we should see some progress in the right direction. But he does not know what he is saying ; and in reality he does not fully believe his own declaration. He employs this statement that he is helpless in sin, without any humble, saddened consciousness that it is verily so. He does not tell the dreadful fact to us with tears in his eyes. He has none of Paul's experience when he said, "O wretched man that I am." On the contrary, it is a cool, calculating, and *unbelieving* method which he adopts to ward off the appeal to his conscience.

It is a species of irony which he uses, a sort of *argumentum ad hominem* which he employs, to foil the effort which a Christian man is making to arrest his attention, and turn it toward his eternal welfare. He says to the Christian minister, or the Christian friend, "By your own showing, I cannot change my own heart; why, then, do you ask me to do anything?" But if he really believed his own words, if with a sincere and a sorrowful *experience* of helplessness, forced upon him after repeated trials to obey the law of God, and repeated failures to do so, he then came to us, saying: "I cannot change my own corrupt heart; how to perform that which is good, I find not;" he would not follow it up with the declaration that there was nothing to be done, but he would cry out of an anxious soul: "Sir, what shall I do to *be* saved, now that I find no power to save myself?"

We wish to dwell upon this objection, which so many employ as an opiate to their conscience, and a shield against the arrows of divine truth. The doctrine that the sinner cannot change his own heart, is either true or false. If any one believes it to be false, he has no right to employ it in any argument whatsoever. He has no

right to urge it as a reason why he may continue in sin. If he believes that he has power, in and of himself, to obey the law of God, then he ought to use it, and having used it, having furnished an example of perfect obedience, he would be obligated to combat the doctrine of human impotence wherever he met it. In that case, he would have refuted it by an ocular demonstration. But if, on the other hand, he is not prepared to deny the doctrine, but actually employs it for logical purposes, then he is bound to follow out his own premise, and come to a practical and humbling conviction of its truth. Logic should be sincere and honest, and no man has a right to employ in an ironical way a premise which in his heart he doubts, even for the sake of a momentary advantage. On any scheme, therefore, every man is obligated to come to consciousness upon this important point. If he possesses plenary power to keep the law of God, he ought to become aware of it, and use it. If he is destitute of power, he ought to know it, and feel it in the centre of his being. A careless, cavilling, ironical spirit, in reference to such a momentous question as this, is utterly inexcusable. No man should be content with anything less than an

experimental sense either of power or of powerlessness.

2. The second duty incumbent upon the helpless sinner is, to believe that *there is power in God to accomplish what he cannot do for himself*. The declaration of our Lord, that no man can come unto him, except the Father draw him, implies that every man can come who is thus drawn. "Every man," says Christ, "that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," says St. Paul—the very man who confessed his utter impotence and helplessness out of Christ.

It is of no salutary benefit to know our bondage to sin, unless we take the next step, and know the power of God to deliver us from it. Of what avail is it to become aware that we are sick, and there stop? Unless we believe in the power of the Great Physician, and apply to Him, our mere consciousness of disease and pain is fruitless. There is no merit in the mere sense of sin and helplessness, and he who never gets

beyond this stage of experience, never gets beyond hell itself. For what is the consciousness of that awful world, but the sense of sin and of eternal bondage to sin? We have seen that this impotence to holiness is the consequence of apostasy, and is a part of human guilt itself. In becoming aware of it, therefore, the soul becomes aware of its own crime; and if it does not take the next step, and implore the pardon of the crime, and a deliverance from self-enslavement, it remains upon the plane of perdition. Only perpetuate this experience of bondage, only let it pass over into eternity, and the soul is forever lost. There is nothing, therefore, in the mere consciousness of inability and helplessness that is of a saving nature. The most intense feeling of sickness will never make a man well; and the most profound sense of sin and corruption will never of itself make a man holy. On the contrary, there is something saddening and depressing in it, that takes away even the impulse to get rid of it. Unless the soul goes out of itself to God; unless the sinner remembers and believes that there is a power in God, by which he can subdue his own lusts, and overcome his own self-will, he will sink down in everlasting de-

spair. And this is the solemn duty incumbent upon the helpless soul, after it has come to consciousness respecting its actual state and condition. When, therefore, the sinner comes to us, saying, *and feeling the truth of what he says*, "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint. I find no penitence and no faith in my experience. I cannot repent, and I cannot believe; godly sorrow will not come at my bidding, and I cannot overcome my doubts and fears:" we say unto him, "Be of good courage; *by the grace and strength of God* you can." We do not dispute his affirmation, that his stony heart is too hard for him to break, that his stubborn will is too strong for him to subdue, that his self-love is too deep and total for him to convert into the supreme love of God; but we do dispute his inference, that therefore there is no help for him in any quarter, and that there is nothing for him but to go down to everlasting sin and everlasting bondage to sin. He is not yet in the category of the devils; he is living under the merciful dispensation of the gospel, and there is a Redeemer who is mighty to save, even to the uttermost, all who come unto God by Him.

The doctrine of man's impotence, therefore, is

preparatory to the doctrine of God's power. With man the thing is impossible, but with God all things are possible. The purpose and influence of this truth, taught by our Lord in the text, is to drive the sinner away from himself to his Saviour. So long as he supposes or dreams that self-regeneration is possible, he will postpone the subject, or will linger about his own resolutions and attempts, and lose sight of the only power in the universe that can renovate him. And so long as he merely becomes conscious of his inability to change his own heart, without at the same time remembering and believing that God has power to change it, he makes no progress toward salvation, but either falls into despair or lapses back into apathy and indifference. But if with every new and deepening conviction of the impotence of the apostate human will, he brings to mind the almighty power of the Holy Ghost, which is freely proffered in Christ Jesus, he unites two things in his own experience which should go together, and which bring him nearer to the goal of salvation.

3. For then he is prepared to discharge the third duty incumbent upon the helpless sinner,

which is, *to implore the renewing power and grace of God*. We say to implore the divine power, because in the act of prayer the soul exercises faith and reliance. The Scriptures everywhere represent *faith* as the particular act by which the soul takes hold of, and appropriates the grace and strength of God. The instant the sinner *trusts* or *relies upon* Christ, he begins to take up into his own heart the fulness of the Redeemer, and make it his own,—the fulness of his atonement, and the fulness of his righteousness. There is no other act by which this can be accomplished. Other graces are necessary, and excellent in their own time and place; such as hope, charity, joy, peace, patience, and such like. But faith, the reliance and recumbency of the soul, is the special and peculiar act by which it gets possession of what is freely offered to it in the gospel promises. “Let him take hold of my strength,” says God, “that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.” Faith is the act by which this is done. Faith is the uniting and appropriating act; and therefore salvation begins and ends with it. The just (that is the justified), shall live by *faith*. By grace are ye saved through *faith*. Now prayer is a clear and

unambiguous expression of faith. He who prays with the Psalmist, "Create within me a clean heart, O God," thereby utters his faith that God has power to create a clean heart, and is willing to create it. And, therefore, we say that the duty which remains for the soul that has become conscious of its helplessness, and knows that there is power in God, is simply to implore the exercise of that power in its own behalf. There is a world of meaning in our Saviour's declaration, "*Ask* and ye shall receive." In this simple asking, the incipient faith of the soul breaks forth. It may be weak and trembling, but the appealing cry, "Lord let thy strength be made perfect in my weakness," is an utterance of commencing trust and commencing reliance.

And it is this inspiring truth and fact that we would urge upon the attention in concluding the discourse. The religious teacher is often asked to define the act of faith; to explain the mode and manner in which the soul is to exercise it. "*How* shall I believe?" is the interrogatory with which the anxious mind replies to the gospel injunction to believe. Without pretending that it is a complete answer, or conceding that it is possible, in the strict meaning of the word, to

explain so simple and yet so profound an act as faith, we think, nevertheless, that it assists the inquiring mind to say, that whoever *asks in prayer* for any one of the benefits of Christ's redemption, in so far exercises faith in that redemption. Whoever, for example, lifts up the supplication, "O Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, grant me thy peace," in this prayer puts faith in the atonement. He trusts in the atonement, by pleading the atonement; by mentioning it in his supplication as the reason why he may be forgiven.

In like manner, he who asks for the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost exercises faith in those influences. This is the mode in which he expresses his confidence in the power of God, to accomplish in his heart a work that is beyond his own power. If, then, you would trust in the atonement, plead the atonement in prayer. If you would rely upon the renewing grace and power of God, implore him to exert that grace and power in your own behalf, in the depths of your own soul. Whatever be the particular benefit in Christ's redemption that you would trust in, and thereby make personally your own, that you may be blessed by it, and

that you may live by it—be it the atoning blood, or be it the indwelling Spirit—*ask* for the benefit. If you would trust *in* the thing, ask *for* the thing. This direction, certainly, is plain. It is the Biblical direction. Take therefore words upon your lips, and go before the Lord, in reference to the subject that has been the theme of these meditations. Tell him in prayer, of your bondage and your helplessness; and in prayer, remind him of his almighty power and promise to renew the sinful heart. In earnest importunity quote to him his own declarations, “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” These promises must be converted into supplications, if we would act faith in them, if we would personally appropriate them.

And this should be done *immediately*. Sometimes the inference is drawn from the doctrine of human inability, that the sinner may procrastinate.

tinate, and "wait God's time," inasmuch as the whole efficiency is of God. But God's time is *now*. "Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation." The only moment of duration in which our Sovereign promises and pledges himself to exert his mercy and his power, is the present moment. Concerning the next instant, or the morrow, he has given no assurance or certainty whatever. We take the sinner, then, at his own proposition. If he would indeed adjust himself to the time which God has chosen, then he should *immediately* cry, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." God's time is *now*.

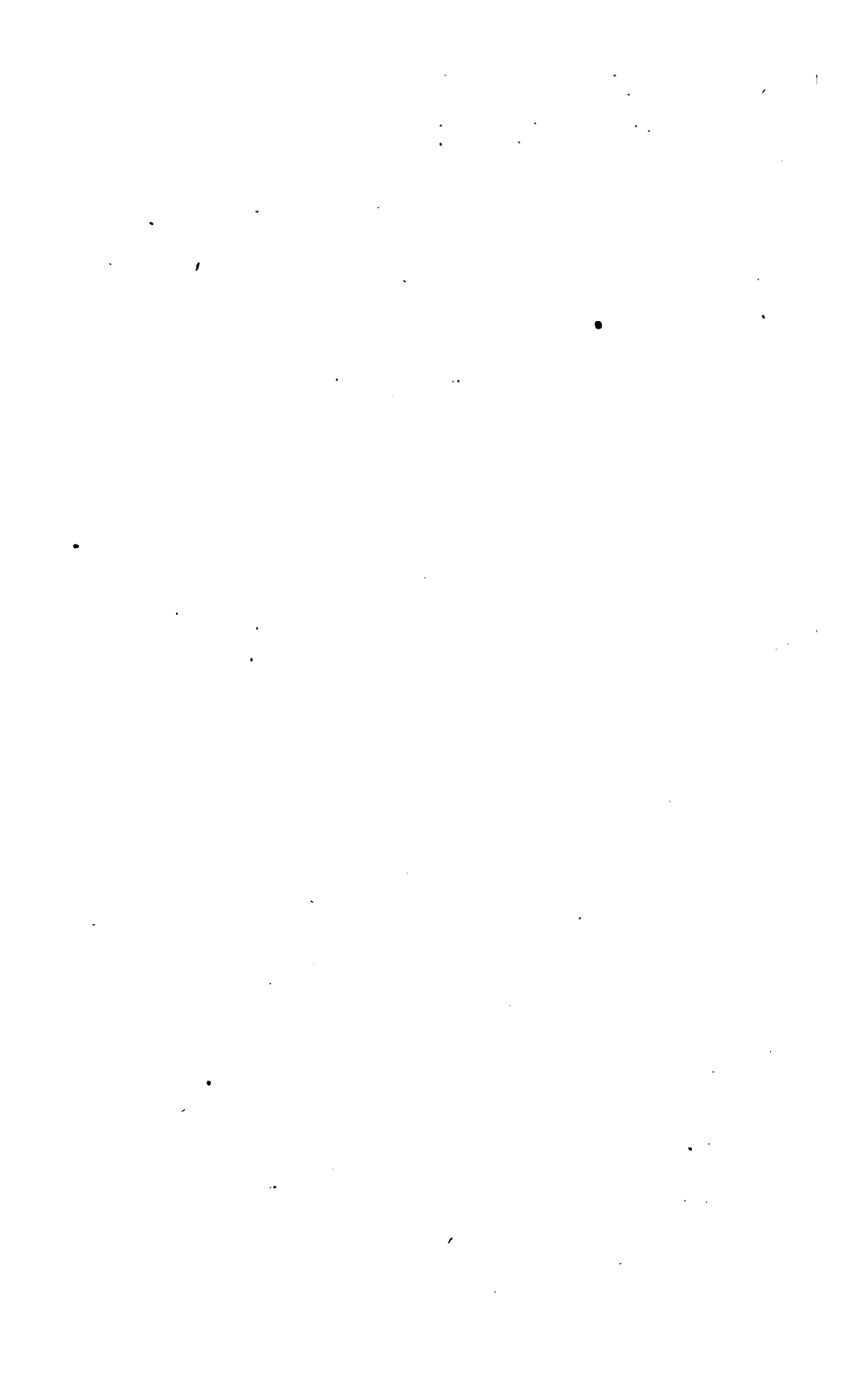


Atonement.

BY THE

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III.

"For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."—1 COR. xv. 3.

THE death of our Lord Jesus Christ for our sins upon the cross, which is declared in the text to be the fundamental doctrine of the gospel, is the chief event in the history of the world. The mind finds here its grandest and most difficult subject of thought. Here it looks upon God not only, but upon God in his vastest work : upon that exhibition of the divine character in which all the attributes of the Godhead appear in their highest manifestation. Here the believer finds his only ground of confidence, the sinner his only hope of salvation. Every promise, assurance, invitation, direction, exhortation has its basis here. The cross is the central idea in the system of salvation.

The most important question which the sinner can ask is, How can man be just with God ? It is a question whose solution defies all human

wisdom, but which is answered by the death of Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin." 1 John i. 7. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. v. 10. That death effects that perfect satisfaction of God's law and justice for sinners which is called the atonement. It magnifies the law and makes it honorable, while it brings God and the sinner into closest and eternal union; so that by it the sinner attains a position which is only less wonderful than the love and wisdom which conceived and executed the plan of redemption. And this is done in the strictest accordance with the nature of God, and the nature of man, so that this marvellous and to human view impossible result, is secured without doing violence to the Divine or human constitution. We are not surprised to learn from the Scriptures that to other orders of beings in other worlds, to principalities and powers in heavenly places, the atonement is an object of the deepest interest, that the death of the Lamb is the theme of the sweetest song in heaven, and that it will continue to be the object of consideration and study, a depth never exhausted.

The atonement has its origin in the depths of God's compassion, in God's wonderful love to sinners. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Eph. ii. 4, 5. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv. 10. The salvation of the sinner commenced in love, a love infinite and eternal, a love which seeks expression in numberless ways, but finds its only adequate manifestation in the gift of God's Son. It is a love which transcends human conception; a love which even the words of inspiration cannot express, for it passeth knowledge. The first, great, blessed truth which relates to the atonement is, that it was prompted and planned by the sovereign, free, unmerited love of God. Whatever other motives enter into it, whatever other ends are accomplished by it, its primal origin is in the love of God for sinners.

But man is guilty. God's law has been

broken by him. And there is an eternal and inevitable antagonism between God and sin. "Our nature, sinful and guilt-laden, is not capable of coming into immediate contact with a holy God and Judge." God is infinitely holy. Before him the cherubim veil their faces as they cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts." His holiness is inseparable from his essence. It is an attribute at once fundamental and central. It pervades his whole nature, so that in whatever he is, or does, or feels, his holiness is manifest. We can not imagine him laying it by even for a moment.

The law of God is the declaration of his holiness. That law is the transcript of his character, and is as unchangeable as himself. It stands and must ever stand firm as the pillars of Jehovah's throne, not one jot or tittle of it failing to be accomplished. Its pureness can never be sullied. Its wisdom, its righteousness, its goodness, will be forever unchallenged. One of the surest evidences of regeneration is the love felt for the law of God, and delight in its requirements. "O, how love I thy law; I delight to do thy will, yea, thy law is within my heart," is the cry of one who has been made, in the

solemnly significant language of Scripture, a partaker of the divine nature ; for God loves his law with a love of which all who are like him must know something ; but of which the strongest emotion of this kind in any creature's bosom is only the faint reflection.

The law of God embraces precept, promise and penalty. The penalty is as inherent and essential, and sustains as vital a relation to the Divine nature as either precept or promise. And when we say that the penalty is essential to the law, we mean, of course, not its utterance only, but its execution in the case of the disobedient. If the penalty is as perfect as the command, if it is as fully in accordance with the nature of God, if it as fully sets forth his glory, being the measure of his hatred of sin, it can not be abrogated, or suspended, or modified, or have anything substituted for it without dimming the perfections of Jehovah. The law in its integrity must stand. It is resplendent with God's glory. It reflects in every feature the spotless holiness and infinite wisdom of its Divine Author.

Hence arises the necessity for the atonement. God by his very nature hates sin. Man is a sinner, married to the law which he has diso-

beyed, and which demands his punishment. That man might be freed from his sin and be reconciled to God, Christ died. "Ye who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Eph. ii. 13. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. v. 10. "We have redemption through his blood." Eph. i. 7.

In order to accomplish this most marvellous work, our Lord Jesus Christ became man. In him were joined in mysterious union two distinct yet inseparable natures, the finite and infinite, the human and divine. He, the God-man, the second Adam, became the head and representative of his people. "He was made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law." Gal. iv. 4. He took the sinner's place, obeyed the law and suffered its penalty. That he obeyed the law is obvious. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." 1 Pet. ii. 22. The testimony of friends, of enemies, the testimony of the Father, of Christ himself is given to his pure and perfect obedience. The whole life of the Redeemer manifested the perfect subjugation of his will to that of his Father. God's law was in

his heart. Spotless holiness shone in every act, word and thought. That the penalty of the law was inflicted on him is no less obvious. We stand by the garden of Gethsemane and by the cross, and we see there a kind and degree of suffering that cannot be explained on the ground of bodily pain or the fear of death. Christ would not so shrink from that which multitudes of his disciples have met with joy. He did not suffer on his own account. He was holy, harmless, undefiled. Nor were his sufferings arbitrarily or causelessly inflicted by God. The supposition is blasphemous. Yet we see him bowed under agony unspeakable, and in the midst of shrouding darkness, while the rocks rend, and the earth quakes, we hear a cry that pierces the heavens, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" What means this appalling scene? There can be no explanation other than that which the Scriptures give, and they give one joyfully full and adequate. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. liii. 6. "Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." 1 Pet. iii. 18. "The church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts xx. 28. "He was wounded for our trans-

gressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." Isa. liii. 5. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. iii. 13. "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." 1 Pet. ii. 24. "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin." 2 Cor. v. 21. Language, broader, clearer, more unqualified can not be chosen. Examine especially the last three texts quoted. "Being made a curse for us." How full of awful meaning the word curse. It is the most fearful term in the Bible applied to the sinner. And let it not be said that the word is only applied to Christ because he was crucified. "The being hung on a tree was not the curse; it was the token, the proof that the individual had incurred the curse." The cross in itself is no place of shame. It has been a throne of glory to multitudes. And even if we were disposed to divest this text of its awful significance, and say, upon a single word you can not found so great a doctrine, yet the same fact is stated in every variety of expression. Take the second of these three texts: "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." The phrase, to bear sin, has a recognized Scriptural meaning, and that is, to bear the punishment

due to sin. A cursory examination of those passages of Scripture in which the phrase occurs, will satisfy any one of this. It will be sufficient to cite but one. Num. ix. 13 : "The man that forbearth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people : because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin." When it is said that Christ bare our sins in his own body on the tree, we can understand the statement in no other way than that Christ bare the punishment which our sins had incurred. The same idea is presented in still another form : "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." While all confusion of identity is here carefully guarded against, so that the idea that Christ became a sinner is expressly denied, it is as expressly stated that he was made sin. It is not to be wondered at, that men stand amazed at this language. We ought to stand amazed. What humiliation and suffering Christ endured for me in other ways may well break my heart, but how could I conceive that he would do this for me ! It was a sacrifice infinitely great to become poor, to become weak, to become despised for me, but to become sin for me

is a depth down which I can not look, a height which the eye can not scale. To bear for me the scoffs and reproaches of *men*, to be despised and rejected of them for my sake, how great the love. But to bear for me the tokens of his Father's displeasure—for my sake to have God forsake him—who can measure this love? Who but must say, O ! the height, the depth, the love which passeth knowledge.

It may be objected that Christ did not suffer in all respects exactly what the sinner would have suffered if Christ had not taken his place—that he knew nothing, for example, of remorse and despair. This is fully admitted, and is not inconsistent with the idea that Christ suffered the full and literal penalty of the law. For it must be remembered, 1. That there are consequences and accompaniments of sin that do not inhere in the law, but are accidental, and arise from the relations which the sinner may or may not sustain. Among these are remorse and despair, and many other forms of suffering. 2. That there are many *precepts* which Christ did not fulfill; such, for example, as those that relate to the duties of a parent, a servant, etc. Yet no one denies that Christ fulfilled the whole

law in the fullest and most exhaustive sense, and so in the same full and exhaustive sense, the penalty was suffered by him, though there are forms of suffering which he did not experience. 3. That the full measure of the penalty will never be exhausted by the sinner, because of his finite nature. Ever approaching in eternity the exhaustion of the curse, he will never reach it. Christ could exhaust it. His infinite nature enabled him to do what the sinner never can do, drain to the dregs the cup of God's displeasure and know its measure and fullness. His pure holiness gave him a capacity for suffering when the burden of our sins was laid upon him which was possible only to his spotless nature. Christ's sufferings are to be measured qualitatively, not quantitatively.

And if it be said that many of those passages which speak of Christ's work must be figurative, that some of those we have quoted can not be understood literally, that we can not conceive, for instance, of Christ's purchasing his people, we say, rather is all earthly purchasing figurative, an image only of that great and wondrous purchase of the church by Christ's own blood. The reality is the eternal transaction—all others

are but shadows. Purchases in which money bears a part, form but a small part of our purchases and the least important. What we thus gain we may dispossess ourselves of as we acquire it at will. But what we purchase in a higher sense, for which we give ourselves or a part of ourselves, is *ours*—ours so that it becomes a part of us—so that we may impart it to others, and yet lose none of it ourselves. The rich man gives his son an education, but the son of the richest man must buy his education if he obtain it, as truly as the poor man's son. No affection, or power, or station can evade this law. If he will have knowledge, he must pay the price—of time, of labor, of other pursuits and pleasures, of himself. He must *buy* knowledge, not figuratively, but really—a buying of which all money purchase is only the shadow. So Christ bought his people, which yet were given him by his Father.

Christ's death, then, was truly expiatory. "He is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John ii. 2. It satisfies God's justice, and meets all the demands of his holy nature. The atonement is real, not apparent. It was not an exhibition whose chief design was to affect the beholder.

It was not that God might *seem* just, but might *be* just and justify the believer. Its vital relation is between God and the sinner for whom it is made, and its primary influence is upon them. Sin is taken away, and God's immaculate holiness no longer requires the sinner's destruction. If ever there was a transaction in the universe which was intensely real, which had nothing in it merely apparent, if ever a transaction in the universe deeply affected God himself, that transaction was the Atonement. The solemn scene on Calvary is indeed an exhibition of the Divine character, and most wonderfully fitted to influence all beholders, holy or sinful, but it is so because there an offended, as well as a loving God satisfies his righteousness and his holiness; because there, to use the words of John Wessel, "we may form some faint conjecture, with how glorious a priesthood, how full a sacrifice, how lofty a ministry, Christ mediated between God and man, seeing he encountered a justice so strict, so rightfully inflamed and armed against us, and encountered it with such success as to vanquish, appease, and satisfy it."

It is sometimes urged that this view of Christ's work excludes the idea of the mercy of

God, for it is said, if justice is fully satisfied, there can be no mercy. If this objection be well-founded, it is conclusive, for any theory that dims in any degree the brightness of God's mercy, must be at once abandoned. Such a theory would find no countenance in the Word of God, which sparkles with the glowing terms in which it describes God's mercy. It would find no place in the heart of the convicted and yet justified sinner, whose cry is, God be merciful, whose sweetest hope is in God's mercy. But, we ask, are justice and mercy so antagonistic, that justice can only be exercised at the expense of mercy, or mercy at the expense of justice? With men this may not infrequently be the case, but it is the very perfection of the Divine dealings, that what is impossible with men is accomplished by God, and that here, in their highest exercise, justice and mercy do meet together, both clearly and infinitely displayed. And remember, again, who provided the atonement. Is there no mercy here? Who planned it? By whose sufferings was it accomplished? Christ and God are not separate Deities, but Christ being "himself God, and priest, and sacrifice, has satisfied himself for

himself and by himself." Is it not the highest work of mercy so to meet the claims of justice, that God and man can be brought into the most intimate union for eternity—so to take away every obstacle that God may draw the prodigal son home again, and clasp him to his bosom in eternal embrace ?

The atonement being thus based on the Divine nature in its deepest manifestations, displays to the full all the moral attributes of God. It could, we think, be easily shown, that without the atonement, we should have had no conception of some of the Divine perfections, and of all of them our ideas must have been much more limited than they now are. In this light we read the declaration of Scripture, that when the foundations of this world were laid, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," not, we may well suppose, merely or mainly over the natural attributes displayed in the creation of a world so insignificant among the mighty and countless masses, the planets and satellites and thronging millions of blazing suns which fly onward in their appointed course through space ; but because this earth was to be the scene of the richest and clearest

display of God's perfections, because here was to be Bethlehem and Gethsemane and Calvary, here was to live and suffer and die the God-man, the Divine Revealer, the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person.

Having thus seen that the atonement is in the fullest harmony with the Divine character, we turn to ask whether it fully meets and satisfies the demands of man's nature, and is in consonance with the constitution given him. That it meets the demands of man's *moral* nature, needs little argument. With man, as with God, the principle of justice is fundamental, however for the time sin may have affected and perverted it. That depth of depravity and recklessness is never reached where the claims of justice do not meet with some response from the heart. Nay, man never comes to that point where his nature does not demand that justice at least to some extent be done. In times of public peril and corruption, as long as the bench preserves its integrity, men do not despair. In the worst days of the English monarchy, hope revived when the judges stood firm for the right. In the wild Babel of democracy, men overlook com-

paratively the corruption of the legislative and executive branches of the government, if only the ermine retains its purity unsullied. In any community, a bribed or perjured legislator is held in no such contempt as a corrupt judge. And, be it remembered, the deepest indignation of a people is stirred, not only when an innocent man is unjustly condemned, but when an acknowledged criminal is suffered to go free. It is sometimes said by writers on the atonement, that injustice consists only in treating criminals worse than they deserve. Every man who looks into his own heart must deny this. The punishment of the innocent does not more arouse public scorn and indignation, than the refusal to punish the acknowledged criminal. Every man feels that injustice is done by such refusal, and persistence in it shocks the deepest moral sense of a people.

But the operation of the principle of justice is not seen in its most powerful form in relation to others. Man fallen can never free himself entirely from its influence in his view of himself. It is one of the most fearfully solemn tokens of our high character and destiny, that the sinner does thus pass judgment upon himself, that

taking his place at once as a judge and a criminal, he pronounces sentence, and demands its execution. This is clearly seen when the conscience is thoroughly awakened, and the Divine law in its power and spirituality is brought home to the heart. How overwhelming are often then the cries of the soul for vengeance on itself. "A guilty conscience, when it has come to a clear consciousness, *wants* its guilt expiated by the infliction of punishment. It feels that strange, unearthly thirst of which Christ speaks, and for which he asserts that his blood of atonement is 'drink indeed.'"

By the atonement of Christ, this sense of justice is satisfied. The demands of the law are fully met, and answered in a way that magnifies the law and makes it honorable. Conscience is appeased by a full recognition and satisfaction of all the claims of justice on the criminal. The question which comes with such terrible power to the awakened and convicted sinner, How can God be just and save me, is so answered that the heart rests in it with implicit confidence, and a peace that passeth all understanding.

The cravings of the heart for mercy are also abundantly met by a mercy which is felt to be

without limit, and the soul melts in the sweetest contrition for its offences, as it learns the great truth that there is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared. Henceforth for all eternity the redeemed sinner praises the Lord God, merciful and gracious, full of compassion and loving kindness, who pardons according to the multitude of his tender mercies, and with whom is plenteous redemption.

The atonement is welcomed the more cordially by the sinner, because it is in entire accordance with the system which God administers in the government of the world. Man's constitution is mediatorial. The atonement introduces no new principle ; it is not an expedient foreign to man's nature, thrust into a system with which it has no harmony. Its principles are the warp and the woof of the human economy. It finds its analogies in every directions in man's being. In the cross I learn the great truth that there is an indispensable relation between Christ's death and all spiritual life—that by the death of Christ I live, and by that alone. But this does not repel me. The same principle meets me everywhere. All natural life is nourished by death. Not a table is spread, not a particle of food taken,

but exemplifies the same fact, that my life is supported by the death of another. Animal or vegetable, something must constantly die that I may live. The atonement is vicarious, and what privileges or benefits have we that do not come to us mediately? Patriots, inventors, discoverers, great men in every department of human exertion, all toil more for others than themselves. Their personal qualities are not transferred; they have the honor which justly belongs to their work, but others reap the results. Martyrs have died for me, soldiers have bled for me; by the mediation of generations before me, I enjoy what I have of freedom, of knowledge, of domestic happiness. In arts, in literature, in science, we reap the fruit of the toil and skill and genius of others. Indeed, where shall I look that I do not find the vicarious principle? Not only is it apparent in the lives of the great, the wise, the brave, the leaders in human thought and activity, but there is not an infant lives its brief span of a few weeks and then departs from a world of which it has been scarcely conscious, whose life has not been without its influence on others. What power have those few days had in moulding the hearts and character of its

parents; its little hand has been strong beyond expression in giving direction to their impulses and actions : how different are they, how different will they always be, because of the brief presence and early departure of that helpless babe.

Not in these respects only does the principle of mediation manifest itself. Its power over the affections is daily illustrated. An aged couple sit by their door in the quiet of a summer evening. They see a stranger approaching, bringing a child of four summers. He informs them that he has been directed to leave the child with them. To this they will not consent. They can not in their old age take upon themselves such a burden. "But this is the child of your only son, who left you for the far west. He and his wife are dead, and his last wish was that their child should be brought here and given to the same arms that nourished him." How warmly do those arms now embrace the little stranger, and from that time, nothing that love can do for him is wanting. Loved for their son's sake, there is lavished upon him a wealth of affection greater, if possible, than they gave to their own child. And so are we loved for the

sake of God's own dear Son, and loved all the more because that love comes to us through the death of his Son.

Do we find in the atonement the principle of representation? We find it also running through all human society. Our governments, our families, our contracts all testify to it. Not a deed is written but proclaims its rightfulness. So interwoven is it with the human constitution, so evident are the "preëstablished harmonies" of the human economy, that many of the deeper thinkers of the church have not hesitated to believe that our human nature which Christ took upon himself was not only created with express reference to Him, which the Scriptures plainly teach, but also with express reference to his incarnation, so that even if sin had not entered the world, the race would have found its headship in Christ, a headship for which it was made, and which would have exalted it far above its primeval condition.

We have seen in the atonement the principle of substitution. So do we meet with it in the daily transactions of life. The payment of every debt rests upon it. All commercial transactions recognize it. Even war itself would be ten-fold the

barbarity it is if this principle were not admitted. It is to be observed, also, that in the application of this principle, there is no confounding of personal identity, nor is there any transfer of moral qualities. A father may endorse for a son, and by the son's criminal conduct, may become legally holden for an amount which can only be met by the surrender of his whole fortune. The judge who pronounces the sentence of the law, honors the man before him for that integrity which, disdaining to seek any subterfuge, meets manfully the requirements of the law, even at the cost of poverty, and the decision which strips the noble old man of all his living, may be accompanied by the warm encomiums of the judge, and will be by the hearty respect of all those cognizant of the facts. So Christ, when suffering the sentence of the law, and visited by God with the doom of the sinner, was never more loved by the Father, and never was more lovely in the eyes of the universe.

And if any still find it impossible to believe that other contrarieties are united in Christ, contrarieties necessary to the work of redemption, if they say how can Christ be God and man, finite and infinite, knowing all things and yet

growing in knowledge, equal with his Father and yet his Father greater than he, we ask them to consider whether these apparent contradictions are not mirrored in themselves, and constantly recognized by even the least thoughtful. I say to my congregation, "My hearers, remember that you are mortal, that you must die, you can not live forever." I say to the same persons, with equal truth, "My hearers, I pray you remember that you are immortal, you can never die, you must live forever." And I know not which is the more important for them to remember, which I would impress upon them more earnestly. And so I know not for which I value my Redeemer the more—that he is God, the Infinite, the Almighty, the Eternal, or that he is Man, my brother, touched with the feeling of my infirmity, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, my personal friend, with a human heart on which I may lean. I bless him that he is truly God, I bless him no less that he is truly man.

And so I rejoice to hear him say, I and my Father are one, and no less to hear him say, My father is greater than I. The relation which is essential and the one which is voluntarily assumed are both joyfully recognized by me, for

they are both necessary for my salvation. And if an objector urges that these two statements in their plain, literal meaning are irreconcilable, I take him into a court room, and show him upon the bench a judge, for example, Mr. Chief Justice Story, and before him an attorney, Mr. Webster or Mr. Choate. The one sits, the other stands. The one declares the law, the other presents his argument. The one pronounces sentence, the other pleads the cause for which he appears. The one gives, the other receives, the marks of respect. Yet the warmest admirer of the judge would not deny that Mr. Webster was his equal by nature, equal in social position, equal in native ability, equal in intellectual culture, equal in mental wealth, equal every where but in official relation. And no man would be more prompt and careful to acknowledge that superiority by every recognized token of respect than the gifted advocate, who, in the consciousness of his power and position, honors himself when he honors the judge.

Such illustrations might be indefinitely extended, but these are sufficient to exemplify our statement that the atonement is in fullest accordance with the nature of God and man.

Instead of being, as we are sometimes told, an expedient violently forced into a system with which it has no sympathy, and in which we look in vain for any likeness or parallels, we have found it satisfying the deepest demands of God and man, and founded upon principles which are vital to man's daily being. The world could not exist without them. They are acted upon by every man every day of his existence. And he who thrusts away the atonement, to be consistent, must give up everything which is peculiar to human nature. He must cease to be a human being.

But why reject the atonement? Why refuse to be saved by Christ? Owing, and willingly owing so much as you do to human benefactors, why reject salvation from him who is the source of all goodness? Owing him everything else, why not come to him for eternal life?

In the atonement is love unspeakable, grace divine, power infinite. By it the guilt of sin is removed, its pollution cleansed, its power broken. Multitudes have tested the efficacy of the cleansing blood of Christ. The greatest and the wisest, the meanest and weakest have fled to it and have been saved by it. A great army have

gone into eternity who were washed in it, and a multitude that no man can number are yet to know its power. And to all eternity the arches of heaven will echo the chorus which comes from the glad lips of ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

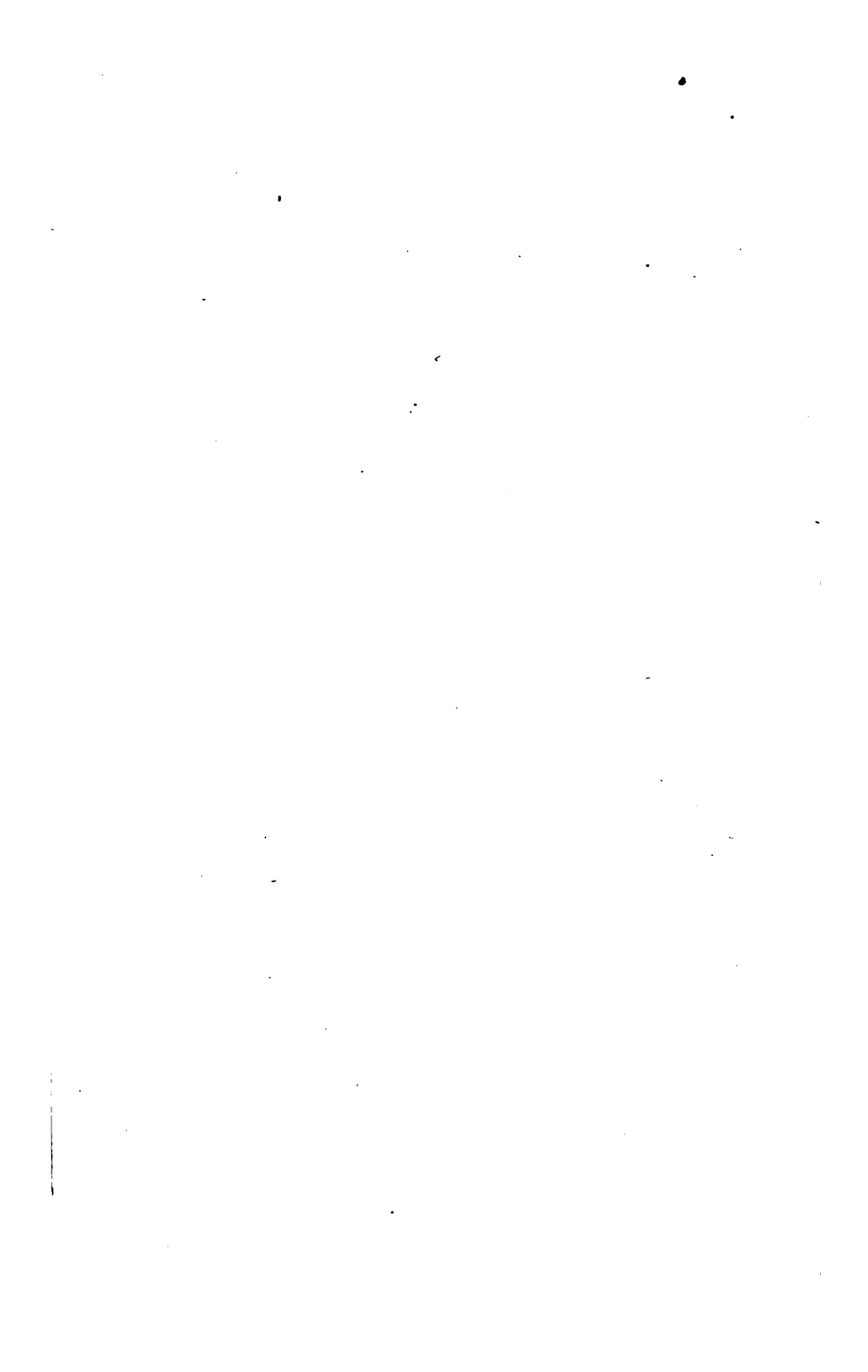


Salvation by Grace.

BY THE

Eli
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IV.

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."

MATT., xviii. 11.

This passage contains two propositions ;

1. That man is by nature lost, and ;
2. That Christ has made provision for his salvation.

Assuming that man is a moral, and an immortal creature ; that a self-existent infinite and holy God is, and ever will be, his moral governor, and that the Bible is his word to man, I invite your attention to these two topics.

1. Man is by nature *lost*.

The object of man's creation and preservation is the greatest happiness of which he is capable, and the glory of God. Accordingly, he is placed under a law, designed to secure these ends, which, as it is dictated by infinite wisdom and goodness, must be, for him, a perfect rule of life. Any other supposition implies either that God did not *know* what was best for man, and conducive to his own glory, or that he lacked the good-

ness to demand it; (*i. e.*) that he is ignorant or unjust. I need not waste time in arguing a proposition so obviously true.

Again, a law is a visible representation of the character of its author. The law of God, laid down for the government of his rational creatures, is a reflection of his moral attributes; the moral perfections of God set before us for our imitation. If "He is holy, and just, and good," his law must be the same. He cannot allow it to misrepresent him, by defects or imperfections. From the ends to be secured, from the character of the Law-giver, and for other reasons, rational creatures would expect beforehand, a rule of conduct absolutely perfect. We find, upon examination, precisely what might have been anticipated. It is all summed up in one word, "*love*" to God and man. This is the description of God himself. "God is love." This requirement provides for every possible moral action in man, illustrates God's perfections, and secures man's highest welfare.

But all men are sinners.

Sin is the transgression of this law. It is not only rebellion against divine authority, impeachment of divine wisdom, defiance of divine jus-

tice, contempt of divine goodness, and virtual renunciation of God; but it implies a depravity of soul, a corruption of nature, that is, in itself, destructive of true happiness. The sinful soul has not only forfeited the divine favor, but it has also lost the divine image. It has neither the title to happiness, nor the capacity for its enjoyment in this world or in the world to come. In addition to this, all the penalties, judicially annexed to the violation of the divine law are charged against it. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point is guilty of all."

Destitute of any native tendency to love or serve God, thoroughly depraved and corrupted in his will and affections, a constant offender against the divine law, burdened with the penalty of eternal death, and powerless, in himself, to change his nature, obey the law, or present any atonement for his sins, man is very properly characterized as *lost*. That this is the representation of Scripture, no honest and intelligent person will deny.

“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”

“The Scripture hath concluded all under sin.”

“They are all gone aside, they are all together become abominable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” “Therefore, by the deeds

of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” “Every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart is only to do evil continually.”

“They that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.” This doctrine is plainly stated in the sixth chapter of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, in these words: “Our first parents, by their sin, fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin; the same death in sin and corrupted nature, are conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation, and from this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.” With equal plainness the IXth of the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England, and of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America

declares : " Original sin standeth not in the following," (or imitation) " of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the fault or corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is, of his own nature, inclined to evil ; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit ; and, therefore, in every person brought into the world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." The Methodist Episcopal Church employs this article as expressive of the doctrine of that denomination, and the same, in substance, is the teaching of Protestant Christendom, and even of the Church of Rome. This is the *lost* condition of man by nature. This testimony is confirmed by all history, observation, and experience. It is exhibited on a large scale in wars of ambition, and of conquest, and in the cruel oppression of the weak by the strong. Every jail, penitentiary, magistrate, and police officer ; every lock, bar, and bolt ; every bond, note, and mortgage ; every legal restraint and security attests it. It is manifested in the sacrifices of the Jew, in the incantations of the savage, in the mortifications of the Pagan, in the

pilgrimages and austerities of the Mohammedan, and in the penances of the Papist.

Its universality is evinced in each man's consciousness of self defect, in his distrust of his fellow, in the common disobedience of God's law, in the misery and death which everywhere reign, in the imperfect obedience, even of those who strive to conform their lives to the Divine will, and in the general rejection of the Gospel, which would, if believed and embraced, save men from the penalty and dominion of sin. God's commandment is exceeding broad." We are condemned and hopeless if we try ourselves by the *letter* of it. If we examine ourselves by its spiritual demands, in all the length and breadth and height and depth of its requirements, we shall be able to find no terms too humiliating, to express our sinfulness and our desert of His wrath. During our state of probation, the infliction of the penalty is withheld, and many temporal blessings are mingled with our lot; but if we enter upon the retributions of eternity, unpardoned and in all the natural deformity of our sinful character, the crushing weight of God's curse must rest upon us forever. Memory, conscience, imagination, affection, reason, every faculty of the soul,

will prove an eternal curse. In that world of sorrow, the lost soul can never, for a moment, sleep, or forget it. It will have no strength to bear the burden, and no courage to brave it. No creature or combination of creatures can afford it any relief. There is neither nook nor cranny, nor corner in the wide universe to which it can escape. It cannot pray for its removal, for in that dark abode of anguish prayer is unknown. There can be no hope of its end. The soul would fain die, but die it cannot. It is cursed with immortality. Man is LOST.

2. But provision is made for his salvation. *Man* could *devise* none, and *make* none. Even if his future obedience could be perfect, he could offer no atonement for his past sins. But his best service here will always be imperfect. His very prayers for forgiveness, will need to be pardoned, and his tears of repentance to be repented of. Man has destroyed himself, and in God alone is his help. The wondrous plan by which God could justify and save the sinner, and at the same time vindicate his character, and honor, and magnify his law, was devised in the councils of eternity. Nature and finite reason are alike uninstructed and dumb in regard to it. It is a

matter of simple revelation. In God's word only, we are taught the source, the character, and the extent of the remedy, as well as the mode in which it is applied. Its *source* is the free and everlasting love of the Father. The voluntary work of the Son opened the channels through which God's mercy can flow to man; and the Holy Spirit bestows the blessings of the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, upon the heirs of promise. The engagements of Christ with the Father in eternity, and their fulfilment in time, by the sacrifice of himself, met and fully satisfied all the requirements of the case. In regard to the penalties of the divine law, He voluntarily becomes the sinner's substitute. With his work God is well pleased. The statements of his own word are, "He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many. Christ died for the ungodly. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the

sins of the whole world." This is the Scriptural account; the great centre truth and fundamental idea of divine revelation, in all the instructions, predictions, ceremonies, types, and shadows of the Old Testament, in the life and doctrine of Christ; and in the teaching of his Apostles. It is set forth in carefully selected terms, in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, as follows: "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him." The IInd of our XXXIX Articles referring to Christ, says: "who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but for the actual sins of men;" and the following language is employed in one of our prayers: "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who made thereby his own oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and

sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

There is much intimated and revealed in regard to this subject, which lies too far back among the "deep things of God" to be fully understood by finite and fallen man. This circumstance, in connection with the fact, that it forms the foundation of the Christian's hopes, and is especially calculated to humble the pride of the unrenewed heart, has always secured for it the interest of the mass of men. It has been a subject of speculation and controversy with multitudes who have never been taught to reason with precision, and of loose harangues with many who are more accustomed to *speak* than to *think*. The result has been defective, partial, and erroneous views of the doctrine. Let me attempt to state it definitely and clearly. God is our *law-giver* and *moral governor*. He is to be regarded especially in *this* character and relation, both in the *punishment* and *forgiveness* of sin. It is essential to law, and an element of it, that guilt shall follow disobedience, and justice demands that punishment shall follow guilt. *Obedience* is what the law demands, not *repentance* nor *amendment*, but *obedience*. If the abso-

lute goodness of the law-giver and of the law itself does not secure this, the same infinite goodness must inforce it, by the infliction of the penalty incurred in its violation, and "the wages of sin is death."

But God is the father of mankind as well as the law-giver and moral governor of the universe. He willeth not the death of the sinner. In the exercise of infinite wisdom which fully comprehends all circumstances, relations, and final consequences, *He* perceived (though *we* may have no faculties to comprehend *hōw*), that all the ends of punishment would be secured, his own perfections illustrated and honored, and the lost race saved, by Christ's voluntary submission to death as the sinner's substitute. The Mediator must be one who can stand between and fitly represent, both God and man, and at the same time be our substitute and surety. He must be Jehovah's equal, and also be human in flesh and blood and soul. God could not commit the vindication of his insulted character and violated laws, to an inferior being, and man could be represented only by one in all points like himself. The nature that sinned must suffer, and the atonement that is made must satisfy infinite jus-

tice. The contest is between the *attributes* of God and the *sins* of man. *Vicarious suffering* is demanded, not negotiation; not *adjustment*, but *expiation*. God and man must be united in this work. The mystery is thus declared, "God was manifest in the flesh. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us." His name is "Emmanuel, God with us." He offers himself, on the cross, a lamb without spot, a sacrifice for sin, God is satisfied with and accepts the offering, and his law is as fully vindicated as if the uttermost farthing of its penalties had been exacted of the offender, while in the very act and mode of its vindication, the most tender compassion to man is displayed. God proves himself to be a just God, and at the same time a Saviour. We read plainly in the charter which conveys our pardon, at once the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the amazing riches of God's grace. Mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. I do not say, nor do I believe, that this is a *full* explanation and account of the incarnation and atoning work of Christ. There is in it, doubtless, a "manifold wisdom," which, to finite creatures, will ever be

unsearchable. But we see and understand enough to satisfy us that there is now no obstacle in the way of the *exhibition* of God's love to man. He can treat him as if he had never sinned. Satisfied and fully vindicated, his *government* demands no more.

God is now "*faithful and just*, to forgive us our sins."

But here another giant difficulty meets us. Man is so utterly depraved, as to regard this stupendous plan of mercy and this atoning work of Christ in his behalf, with indifference, sometimes even with hatred and contempt.

The prison doors are thrown wide open, the chains of condemnation and guilt in which sin had bound him are removed; he is invited and entreated to walk forth, regain, and enjoy his freedom; but a loathesome jail-fever raging through all his system, deprives him of reason and fills his mind with fancies. He has no power to move if he would, and no disposition to do so if he could. He prefers his cell, his disease and his chains, to light and health and liberty. Shall he be left thus miserably to perish after all that has been done to save him? No! The Saviour's work is complete. He is not only the *way*, but

the *truth* and the *life*. The Spirit, his purchased gift to man, in the day of His power, takes hold of the alienated and resisting soul, searches its recesses, tries its reins, exposes "the foulness of its sin and the vileness of its *worth*," touches its secret springs of action, subdues its enmity to the law of God, and, without any invasion of its freedom, but according to the laws of mind, creates the man anew in Christ Jesus. Turning from himself in whom, when enlightened, he discovers only ignorance, unworthiness, condemnation, and despair, he finds his Saviour, made of God unto him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Christ is all his salvation and all his desire. He experiences "joy and peace in believing." An "heir of God, and joint heir with Christ to an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading," he goes on his way rejoicing, daily growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and becoming more and more "meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light."

In this work of the sinner's salvation we see the united agency of the Three Persons in the adorable Trinity. The Father stands before us

as the representative of justice and moral government, the Son as the Saviour of the sinful race by repairing the breach in the Divine law which the fall of man had created, and the Spirit as the agent who takes these things of Christ, and applies them, with saving power, to the human soul.

The proper atoning work of the Redeemer is not only the foundation of all our hopes and the source of all our life and joy, but the character of God is most clearly and vividly presented in the cross of Christ. When God "spares not his own Son," but delivers him up for us, when we behold him inflicting the penalties of the violated law, in their sternest rigors, upon his beloved and only begotten Son, because he finds his Son in the sinner's place, we almost imagine that we can perceive the inner workings and emotions of the Divine mind. When we witness this unspeakably awful display of inexorable and even-handed justice, in its inflexible demand of so wondrous an expiation, we are tempted to feel that justice has overmastered mercy; but when we look again, we see mercy triumphant and rejoicing in the very act and mode of God's dispensation of judgment. While

the agonies of the cross, the darkened heavens, and the quaking earth, tell us of man's sin and guilt, and proclaim, trumpet-tongued, as in tones of thunder, that God is just; they also announce, in softer accents, but with equal clearness and emphasis, that "God is love." "He is a just God and a Saviour." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. "No man," says our Saviour, "cometh unto the Father but by me." Blessed be God, that he has laid help for us upon One who is thus mighty to save to the uttermost all who come to God through him; that he has not only made such ample provision for all our wants, but has also proclaimed in all our ears, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely, and whosoever cometh unto me I

will in no wise cast out." Is there one here to-night ready to say of all this, Ah, Lord, "Doth he not speak parables?" "Such abstractions which men neither love nor trust in have no power to influence their hearts or improve their lives. Tell us what we are to be and do." Is then the infinite and eternal Jehovah an abstraction? Are his attributes figments of the human imagination? Are the wondrous mechanism of the universe without us, and of the world within us, and all their orderly and harmonious adjustments and movements the result of blind chance? Is the *moral government* of God a mere idle speculation? Is the human soul an abstraction? its immortality a conceit, its moral powers an idea of dreamers, its responsibilities the invention of theorists? Is the whole scheme of providence and grace, a vagary of philosophers? Is the Bible the device of human cunning or human crime? Is heaven a fancy and hell a fable? Is there no God, no Saviour, no Holy Spirit? Then, worm of the dust, child of a day, eat and drink, for to-morrow you die! Not so, my friend. The truths, which you have heard to-night, are eminently practical, and infinitely momentous. The history, the hopes, and the

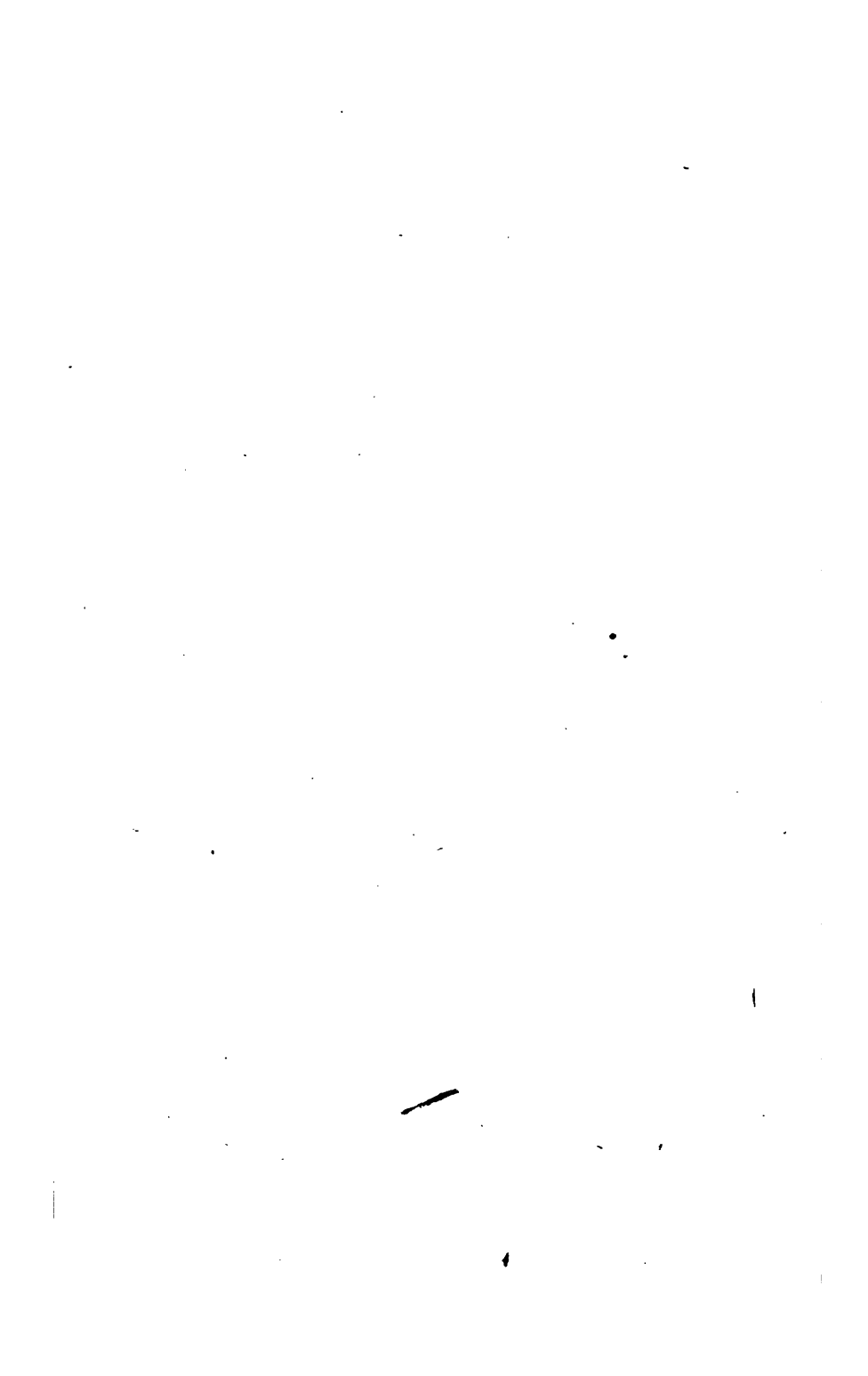
destiny of man are bound up in them. That Divine Saviour, who left the glories of heaven, took our nature, suffered the unutterable agonies of the garden and the cross, died and rose again for us, now at the right hand of the Father, invested with infinite power and majesty, wields the sovereignty of the universe as King of kings and Lord of lords. Even on his throne of glory he is the same friend of sinners, ever living to make intercession for us, pleading his all-sufficient merit and sacrifice, and wooing us by his gracious Spirit. May we each look, in self-renouncing faith, to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," and live.

Regeneration.

BY THE

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V.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—JOHN iii. 3.

REGENERATION is a change of mind and character so thorough and well defined as to be compared to a new birth. To discuss it thoroughly would require a treatise. Limited to a single discourse, we confine attention to three leading points; its necessity, its nature, and its evidences. To show its necessity, we must consider man's condition before it occurs. That this is depraved no thinker will deny. To do so would be to make all history mysterious, all moral philosophy obscure, all human experience inexplicable. We do not escape the doctrine of depravity by denying the Scriptures. It was a *heathen* poet who expressed the sad conviction of the universal heart in the words which Pope has so happily translated :—

"I see the good, and I approve it too,
Condemn the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue."

How man came into this lamentable state we do not stop to inquire, though we may remark that philosophy has failed to give any more satisfactory account of the fall than Moses, whose record, whether taken literally or symbolically, leaves unimpeached alike the responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God.

Human depravity is, 1st, *Universal*. Paul says, "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin." "There is none that doeth good." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

2d. *Natural*. In one of the earliest pages of revelation, we read that "man is prone to evil, as the sparks fly upward," that is, by a law of nature; in one of the latest, "The carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The carnal mind, in the language of Scripture, is the inborn character of humanity. To say that depravity is the result of bad *example*, is to put the effect for the cause. Moreover, the power of bad example implies a susceptibility to evil in those whom it leads astray. To ascribe it to *education* is equally futile, since no nation has ever educated its youth in the vices which have disgraced it, and most of

them have educated them in the contrary virtues. The stream of depravity issuing in the hidden depths of the heart rushes out before the period of pupilage, and rolls forward in a current which, however, the obstructions of precept, authority, nature, providence, law, police, reason, conscience, and Scripture may *check*, they cannot *arrest*.

3d. *It is total.* The apostle to Ephesian converts writes, "Ye were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein, in time past, ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," and adds, "Among whom also we all had our conversation in time past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as others." How could total depravity be more strongly asserted. As this doctrine lies at the foundation of the Christian faith, and as its contrary is the origin of nearly all heresy and infidelity, we would not give the adversary any advantage by leaving it without proper qualifications. The doctrine does not imply that depravity is *equal* in all cases. The variety of

capacity among men renders this impossible. Much less does it imply that all men exhibit the utmost development of depravity. As the saint grows more and more perfect until he becomes an angel, and even at God's right hand grows powerful, and wise, and lovely for ever, so the sinner gradually ripens into a devil, to grow more and more a devil, long as he lifts up his eyes in hell. Nor does it imply that there are no excellencies in the unregenerate. The faculties and affections although perverted are right; the mind is made to apprehend truth, the heart to love that which is lovely, and the conscience to discern right from wrong, feel the power of moral obligation and impel in the path of duty. Hence civil law generally runs in the grooves of divine, moral instruction is according to virtue, and public judgments concerning both principles and characters are in the main correct.

Many of the actions of the unrenewed are innocent and even admirable. How pleasant to see the mother gather her children to her arms! but there may be no more virtue in the act than in the hen gathering her chickens under her wings. How noble for one to cleave to his friend in disgrace, sorrow, even death! yet there

may be no more merit in his fidelity than in that of the dog that pillows his warm head upon the cold bosom of his master and howls his distress through day and night beneath the warrior's crimsoned and stiffened cloak. How sublime for a father to rush into the flames to rescue his boy, yet he may deserve no more credit than the bear that defends her cubs until at last she covers them with her dying body. Again, perverted passions may cancel each other, so as to reduce the *development* of depravity well nigh to zero. Thus a man may be too proud to be vain, too avaricious to be sensual, too ambitious to be mean. A selfish love of glory may plant a man firmly at Thermopylæ even while treason rankles in his breast, and a fear of punishment may turn Balaam curses into blessings though he love the wages of unrighteousness. The influence of education, the force of habit, the exactions of refined society, the power of cultivated taste, and the desire of a good name, may guard, on all sides, the outgoing of depravity, whilst the heart is all hatred to virtue and to God. Superstition too may accidentally form a confederacy with right. The lawless Bedouin who tracks the traveller through the desert, and pants to mingle

the blood of his unoffending victim with the sand, will often display a hospitality and generosity that would put a Christian to the blush.

External circumstances are often unfavorable to the development of depravity. Hence the comparative innocence of the young and the apparent innocence of the refined. In the sanctuaries of our homes, in the circle of our friends, in the characters of history, we often find unregenerate men not only free from disgusting vices but adorned with many virtues; so that outwardly regarded, their lives are more beautiful than those of Christians generally. Such was the young man in the Gospel with whom our Saviour seems to have fallen in love at once, but who, when tested, was found wanting in the spirit of obedience; and Nicodemus, who came to Christ an intelligent, respectful believer, but who needed to be born again.

When we say depravity is *total*, we mean—

(a.) *Total want of allegiance to God.* South of our line of loyalty are many men of rare excellence—faithful to their families, creditors, churches, and states. Suppose they were tried for treason, could they set up their personal excellencies or their fidelity to ecclesiastical and

municipal law as a defence? Indeed, their very superiority by increasing their influence aggravates their treason, and their faithfulness to local governments whilst these are against the general government intensifies their crime. So long as they walk according to the course of rebellion, according to the President of the Confederacy, to the spirit of insurrection, having their conversation in treason, fulfilling the desire of its mind, they are without the President of the United States, aliens from the Union, strangers to the covenants of its constitution, and without hope of its protection; and no constellation of civic virtues or crown of rebel glory could save them from the condemnation of its judiciary. So with unconverted men. With all their conceded excellencies and noble deeds, so long as they say in their hearts, "I prefer my will to God's," they are strangers to the covenant of mercy and total traitors to heaven.

(b.) *That depravity pervades the soul throughout.* There is much unguarded language in our discussions. We speak as though the curse of the fall had left intellect and conscience unimpaired, and dropped upon the heart only, forgetful that the soul is a unit, and that a blight can

not fall upon it without affecting its totality. We often say, "My heart is right though my will is wrong," as though heart could go to Paradise while will goes to perdition. Suppose, however, we overlook the fact that intellections, volitions, and affections are different states of the same being, and regard the faculties, divided for philosophical convenience, as actually separable; it is easy to show that they are so related that a derangement of one involves a derangement of all. Suppose the intellect unimpaired and the heart depraved, would not the latter affect the operations of the former, turning it aside from this evidence, fixing it upon that, minifying proof on the right side, magnifying it on the wrong, setting good character in unlovely attitudes, bad in lovely ones; clothing truth in vile raiment and error in meretricious charms? Suppose the conscience perfect as an angel's, its indications would be wrong if its associate faculties were disordered. It sits as judge, but like other judges it proceeds upon the law and the facts. If either the law be wrong or the facts imperfectly reported, the decision must be wrong though the judge be perfect. But conscience is dependent upon intellect for both the law and the evidence

upon which its decisions rest. The faculties are like partners in a firm, the injury of one is the crippling of the others—like members of a family through which the wave of sympathy spreads good or evil. Hence, if any *part* is sick, the *whole* head is sick, the *whole* heart faint.

(c.) *That there is in the depraved heart no power of self-renovation.* There is no germ from which righteousness may be produced by cultivation. "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." You may plant an orange tree in Iceland, and by surrounding it with the soil and imitating the temperature and moisture of the tropics, raise oranges, but no cultivation can produce a new seed. There is no *discipline* by which depravity may be wrought out and righteousness wrought in; under every regimen the carnal mind is enmity against God. However circumstances may modify the *developments* of depravity, they cannot alter its *essence*. Some supposing it to be physical, have tried to extinguish it by voluntary suffering, and have subjected themselves to pilgrimages, penance, long abstinence, and self-torture, sometimes rolling the body over the ground week after week and month after month, sometimes hanging it upon hooks until it was

emaciated, but the experiment has always been fruitless, and no wonder; for sin is not in *matter* but in *mind*. - "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond, it is graven upon the table of their *heart*." Many seeing the inadequacy of this process, refer its completion to a future state. But purification by purgatory has no foundation either in reason or revelation. Suffering an *effect* can not destroy sin its *cause*. "Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will *not* his foolishness depart from him." The Bible restricts probation to *life*, and describes but two states beyond it. Others referring sin to a *taint of the spirit*, have supposed purification to be effected by transmigration. This theory, originating in India, transferred to Egypt, taught in Greece by Pythagoras, is one of the oldest and most prevalent, and it has its advocates at this day. The Brahmin refuses to take the life of an animal lest he should disturb the soul of an ancestor. The theory is, however, without foundation in Scripture or support in philosophy; for how could a soul acquire virtue by becoming brutalized, or lose its vice by acquiring the inclinations of a beast. The wicked spirit in man

or swine is holden with the cords of his sins. Some supposing sin to depend chiefly on external temptations, have tried to *lock* it out by the key of the monastery, or to *hide from it* in the depth of the wilderness; but as well might the Ethiopian lock out the color of his skin, or the leopard run away from his spots. Some have sought to change depraved nature by mere *volition*, but “who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean.”

4. *Depravity is positive.* Not that there is any poison infused into the soul or body, but as the soul is necessarily active it must *manifest* its depravity. This positive results from a negative; the depravation arises from a deprivation. In this both Arminius and Calvin, John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards agree.

We come then to the cause of all depravity, it is the *absence of the love of God from the heart.*

It may be supposed that this theory is too simple, but simplicity of causes reconciled with multiplicity of effects is the great secret of nature. Take away the attraction of *gravitation*, and you take down all the stars; take away the attraction of *cohesion*, and solids become fluids and fluids aëriform; take away *chemical affinity*,

and compounds are resolved into elements; thus, by simple loss of attraction, this world of order and beauty becomes a disordered chaos of repellent atoms. Man, by his fall, lost the Spirit of God—the source of spiritual life—and of course, perpetuated his race in this state of spiritual destitution, without divine love, by which alone his passions and propensities could be controlled.

That the love of God is wanting in the unrenewed man is evident alike from our thoughts, feelings, and volitions. If men loved God, they would make his name, his attributes, his relations, the theme of their constant and delightful meditations. They would apprehend him in his works, bow before him in his providences, and trace him with adoring gratitude through his word. They would find him to be the Alpha and Omega of all science, all enjoyment, and all duty. Their minds would receive divine truth as the atmosphere receives the rays of the sun, and be drawn up from the earth as the vapors are drawn from the valleys to the skies; they would receive each morning the anointing of joy, and go forth each day in the garment of praise. Men may admire the works of God, but is it not admiration of the architecture rather than of the

architect. They may adore the Creator, but is it not the creature of their own fancy—not the Eternal, Infinite, Holy One! They may think of the *true* God when some alarming providence breaks in upon the current of ordinary thought, but as soon as the alarm subsides do not their minds relapse into the channels of godlessness? God is not in all their thoughts. Terrible condition! To think, yet never think up to Him who is the fountain of all thought; to see the heavens and the earth, yet never see Him who made, sustains, and shines through all; to float in a universe of blessings, yet empty of Him who filleth all things—a moral vacuum in an infinite and everlasting plenum. Yet go into the world and listen to the conversation of men—war, stocks, markets, science, literature. Mention God, and you are frowned down. Tell it in heaven that here rolls a world where the inhabitants generally do not talk of God, and surely the angels would say, “There rolls a devoted province of God’s dominions.” God is the one theme all over their fields of light, and his praise is sounded as with the notes of cataracts and thunder.

Men’s hearts are out of sympathy with God.

His great interest in earth is the redemption of sinners. Is it theirs? Try them. Put them in a circle of men crying, "Lord, have mercy on us, sinners." Saints and angels are happy; heaven rejoices; but do they? Set a sinner in the company of the good, and as their souls draw nearer to heaven will they not grow more and more out of harmony with his? Men's wills, too, as a necessary result, run not with God's.

A clock without a balance-wheel may run, but only to mislead. Restore the balance, and the hands run round the face in harmony with the heavens. A heart without love to God is in conflict with the moral universe. Restore love, and the law in both tables is fulfilled. Love worketh no ill to man—no offence to God, but brings each element of the soul to its place and carries the hands round the circle of duty in symphony with the skies.

This is regeneration; without it, though with all other excellencies, we are but as tinkling cymbals; with it, we have the whole constellation of virtues. As the heart is the seat of the affections, regeneration is called a new heart, a right spirit, a spiritual mind. It is no new term, but has been used by Jews and Pagans as

well as Christians both in ancient and modern times.

Secondly. *We have seen the necessity of a moral change, let us see what is its character.*

It is supernatural. That God would not leave mankind in a fallen condition, it is but reasonable to suppose. To provide for their redemption, he spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all. This scheme makes provision for, 1st, The forgiveness of sins; 2d, The restoration to the soul of the Holy Spirit, which was withdrawn at the fall, and by which man, being renewed in the image of God, has the love of God shed abroad in his heart. This spiritual change, though distinct from pardon, is simultaneous with it. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." It is preceded by repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and followed by adoption into the heavenly family.

The mode, the motive, and the degree in which the Spirit operates in effecting regeneration, are speculative points into which we shall not enter.

All agree that without it no man can be happy

either in this world or the next; or have any qualification for heaven or well-founded hope of entering it: that it must occur in the present state, and that it may occur suddenly. Some maintain that it may also occur gradually; and of those who take this ground, some teach that it is *generally* instantaneous, *often* gradual; others, that it is *generally* gradual, *often* instantaneous; but whether it occurs in the one mode or the other, all admit it to be a *divine* work. "For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works." "But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ," or rather by Christ. "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, by the Spirit of God." Nothing can more clearly assert that this change is divine.

Thirdly. *We proceed to inquire, lastly, into its evidences; these are of two kinds, internal and external.*

It changes the disposition of man, so that it becomes a fountain of holy thoughts, emotions, and volitions. It creates a relish for spiritual things. God becomes the object of daily meditation. We contemplate his attributes and works

with awe and admiration, his excellence with delight, his blessings with gratitude, his scheme of salvation with faith, his precepts with pleasure, his warnings with reverence, his providences with resignation, and his promises with hope and unspeakable joy. We love and receive our Lord Jesus as our only all-sufficient Saviour. Realizing our own weakness and worthlessness and folly and guilt, and the beauty and breadth and perfection of the redeeming scheme, we rest confidently in Christ's power and readiness to save, and would have no other salvation even if we could. The Holy Spirit is sought and felt and adored. The Bible becomes a new book; we linger and pray over its pages, we see the abundance of its evidence, the grandeur of its doctrines, the purity of its precepts, the amplitude of its promise, the clearness and copiousness of its instruction, and the divinity of its spirit. We are drawn aside to prayer; it is our very breath; we cry unto God for we cannot help it; we feel that we cannot walk the sea of life without his hand, nor bear life's sorrows without his love. "Whom have we in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that we desire beside thee." "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so

panteth our souls after thee, O God." If he withdraws himself, all is darkness, even in mid-day ; and in this darkness the resolute soul stays itself and exclaims, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me ; hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." The love of God leads to the love of the brethren, because they are brethren, children of God, bearing the image of Christ—the saints, the excellent in the earth, in whom, says the Psalmist, "is all my delight," whose company we seek, whose conversation we enjoy, whose sentiments we approve, and for whose holiness and salvation we ever pray ; and, of course, love for the church—the congregation of saints—which Christ has organized, in which he dwells, and concerning which David says, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." "If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." With brotherly love, there is also the love of complacency toward all virtuous beings, and the love of benevolence toward all mankind, though sinners. The will, too, is changed, and flows sweetly into the divine, every thing that exalteth

itself against God being cast down, and every thought and feeling being brought into subjection to the law of love. Hence the external evidence—a change of life, a going forth in imitation of Christ to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, enlighten the minds and purify the hearts of men. Not that we are to neglect our own household, for this were to deny the faith and be worse than an infidel; not that we are to neglect our business, for this were to abandon the means of usefulness; but that we are to consecrate ourselves and our earnings to God, and hold all we have, and are as his stewards. With practical and constant benevolence, the Christian manifests the mind of his master; humble, gentle, meek, complying, forgiving, moderate, forbearing; swift to mercy, slow to wrath, relieving the distresses, rejoicing in the prosperity and praying for the salvation even of those who despitefully use him.

There is, too, in a regenerate man, a steadiness and uniformity of life which shows that his conduct flows not from variable emotions but invariable principle. Where piety and beneficence—the internal and external evidences—combine, sustaining and illustrating each other, and espe-

cially where both the subject and his friends are sensible of a gradual improvement in his character, there is little room to doubt that he is a new creature.

In judging of a regenerated character, we must bear in mind, 1st. That regeneration leaves us with all our natural appetites, affections, faculties, and worldly responsibilities. We have the same families to support, the same station to fill, the same care to exercise. The *motives* and *principles* only with which we traverse our accustomed circle are different. As regeneration destroys no old faculties, it imparts no new ones.

2. *That it leaves us with our imperfections of intellect, of education, and of habit.* It does not bring us into the condition of an angel, or even of Adam, it completes not a new but a much impaired structure. Whose health is perfect? whose pulse beats the exact number of pulsations? whose lungs take the precise number of inspirations required? whose mind is perfect? whose knowledge is perfect? With the love of a seraph, while we are encompassed with infirmities, we are liable to fall into error, trespass, and harm.

3. *Our regeneration is imperfect.* There are roots of bitterness, remains of the carnal mind,

in the regenerated soul, and a conflict rages between the new and the old life, in which the latter often appears triumphant, so that were it not for the Advocate with the Father and a new application of the atoning blood, we should soon fall into condemnation, but there is, under fidelity to Christ, a gradual progress and ultimate triumph of grace. The love of God waxes stronger and stronger until it is the all-controlling principle, and the soul comprehends what is the length and depth and breadth and height and knows the love of God which passes comprehension, and is filled with all the fullness of God.

There is, then, a broad line of demarcation between the unregenerated and the regenerated man, however much the excellencies consistent with depravity and the imperfections consistent with holiness may obliterate this line to superficial observation.

The one says, "God is all right, I have been all wrong," the other does not; the one relies alone upon the atonement of Christ, the other does not; the one hates sin and loves holiness, the other does not; the one draws nearer and nearer to God in prayer and duty and praise, the other does not; the one aspires after holiness,

the other after prosperity; the one finds his hopes and treasures in this world, the other finds his in the heavens. Though similar in many respects, yet in temper, tendency, and taste they diverge. Two rays starting from the bosom of the sun may seem at first nearly parallel, yet who shall calculate their ultimate divergence.

So there may be two women grinding at the mill, two men ploughing in the field, two students studying in the dormitory, two lovers knocking at the door, yet in a few years their separation shall be measured only by the great gulf between the rich man and Lazarus.

If any of us sink to the abodes of the lost, it will be *our* fault, *not God's*. On going home to-night the unregenerate man may confess his sins and ask for mercy; if he cannot repent, he may call on God to *help* him; if he have not evangelical faith, he can cry out, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." He can ask for the Holy Spirit, and if he do this he may be regenerated; for He who cannot lie hath said, "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened." He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children.

Faith:

ITS IMPORTANCE, NATURE, AND REASONABLENESS.

BY THE

REV. ABEL STEVENS, LL.D.,

*[Dr. Stevens' sermon was delivered extempore; the outlines of it only are
here given.]*



VI.

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him."—HEB., vi. 6.

"By grace are ye saved, through faith."—EPH., ii. 8.

"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."—ROM., x. 10.

SHOULD an earnest inquirer read through the New Testament for the first time, pressed by that greatest of all questions, "What shall I do to be saved?" he could not fail to be struck with the fact that something, called faith, is required, throughout its pages, as an indispensable condition of his salvation—that without this the whole personal efficacy of the Christian system must finally and fatally fail to him. He would find the successive stages of the spiritual life sufficiently discriminated, but all corresponding in one point—all conditioned on faith; that if charity is its supreme virtue, faith is its supreme condition—faith the beginning, though charity the end. "Faith, hope, charity, the greatest of these being charity." "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." "By grace are ye saved, through faith."

First. He would perceive that Justification—the initiation of the Christian life—is thus conditioned. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” “A man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.”

Secondly. He would observe that Sanctification is by faith—“Sanctified by faith which is in me;” “Purifying their hearts by faith”—and that, in other words, all the formal means of sanctification—prayer, fasting, sacraments, “good works”—are dependent for their purifying efficacy—for “the Holy Spirit which gives that efficacy—upon faith; are, in fine, but aids to faith.

Third. He would see that the special tests or trials of a good man, his temptations, his mysterious inward conflicts, can be successfully met only by faith—that, in the sublime language of the apostle, “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.” History records, with poetical licence, one hero who is said to have conquered the world; but hundreds of thousands of humble saints, unknown to the world, living and dying in its lowliest obscurity, have

conquered it by their faith: "The poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom." The legends of the church speak of St. George as slaying the dragon; it is a fable; but the humblest saint, living by faith, "bruises Satan under his feet." "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat," said Christ to an apostle, "but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not"—for his faith was the condition of his safety in "the hour and power of darkness."

Again, such an inquirer as we have supposed, would observe that the habitual Christian life must be maintained by faith; that "the just [the righteous] shall *live* by faith." "We *walk* by faith;" that is to say, all the advancements and habitual duties of a truly spiritual life must be by faith. Without it they fail of their specific character as holy and acceptable in the sight of God. "Without faith it is impossible to please him." "By faith ye stand." "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." The reading or hearing of the Word, prayer, the sacraments, all the "means of grace," I repeat, are but aids to faith; they have no saving efficacy apart from it. "According to

your faith be it unto you." "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?" "The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith." "The prayer of faith shall save the sick; and if he hath committed sins they shall be forgiven him." "By whom alone we have access, by faith, into this grace, wherein we stand." "Let him ask in faith nothing doubting." The shield of the Christian is called a "shield of faith;" his breastplate, a "breastplate of faith;" his fight, "the good fight of faith." The gospel is "the word of faith which we preach." The law, or system, under which we are saved is "the law of faith." The practical fidelity of Christian men is "the obedience of faith." The church is "the household of faith;" its catholic communion is "the unity of faith;" its great achievements are "the work of faith with power." The confidence of its individual members is "the full assurance of faith;" their rejoicing, "the joy of faith;" their temptations, "the trial of their faith much more precious than that of gold which perisheth;" their Redeemer, "the author and finisher of their faith;" their final redemption, "the end of their faith—even the salvation of their souls." They must

at last enter into their rest by faith; they cannot die in hope without it. In that trial, when sight and reason fail to penetrate the future, faith alone remains. Paul, in reasoning from the analogy between the sojourn of the Hebrews in the desert and the Christian pilgrimage, says, "To whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?" "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

Finally, our inquirer would meet, and probably pause at, a comprehensive, a sweeping, a startling declaration—that "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." He would not find it unintelligible, nor even doubtful, for the whole tenor of the Scriptures explains it. He would not, uncharitably, infer from it, as some hastily have, that the "good works" of an unregenerate man are sinful. As far as they go they are indeed good, and to be commended. It is much better that they be done as they are, than that they be not done at all. But though virtuous, they fail of the highest, the Christian style of virtue; and this deficiency "is sin"—a negative sin. The greatest

deed of virtue that fails to recognize God, fails immeasurably. The smallest deed of virtue that recognizes him, partakes of his own greatness; as the smallest gem shines with the light of the sun. No act done for God can be small. "Who-soever shall give unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." "In the name of a disciple"—that is to say, as a believer in Christ.

Having thus noticed the relations of faith to the Christian life, such an inquirer as we have supposed will eagerly ask, What is this principle of faith, this universal and indispensable requirement of the Christian revelation? If I can ascertain the answer to this question, I find the key to the whole gracious system of Christianity—the key to the very gate of heaven; for though I perceive, by these records, that I cannot be saved without the atonement, yet obviously the atonement is a provision on the part of God, but he requires something co-operative on my part; and that something is here called faith. What, then, is faith? Where is it defined? He discovers in the record scarcely a specific or technical definition of any doctrine. It teaches

indirectly or by implication—illustratively rather than logically. He finds there no precise definition of religion itself; for though an apostle says, “Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world,” yet this evidently is a characterization rather than a definition of religion; for religion is regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and this is only the practical effect of religion. St. Paul tells him that “faith is the substance [subsistence] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Yet this, again, is but a characterization, as if the apostle had said, such is the power of faith, that things hoped for seem already to subsist, things unseen to be visible to the believing soul.

If he turn over the record to search farther, he discovers that it speaks of various kinds of faith.

First. It alludes to what may be called a faith of miracles, by which “signs and wonders” were wrought; but this was a temporary gift to special individuals, for a contemporary purpose—the introductory demonstration of Christianity. If it

was even a modification of the faith by which the soul is saved, it was not precisely or fully that faith. Christ spoke of it when he said to his disciples, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." "To one," says Paul, "is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge; to another faith"—that is a faith not given to all—"a peculiar impulse," says a Biblical critic, "that came upon the apostles when any difficult matter was to be performed, which inwardly assured them that God's power would assist them in its performance." But Paul says, "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and have all faith [that is, all the power of this kind of faith,] so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." Visions, revelations, extraordinary physical excitations, are evidently then not to be expected as proofs of saving faith or of genuine conversion. On the contrary, there may be a profound unbelief in the very demand for such demonstrations; a wish to substitute the proof of the senses in the place of faith. "Except ye see signs and wonders," said Christ, upbraidingly, "ye will not believe."

Another kind of faith is mentioned in the record—a dogmatic or doctrinal faith; and very important is it. It must, indeed, be the basis of any higher faith; for there are certain fundamental opinions without which gracious sentiments cannot exist. “For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Our inquirer might here pause, and adopting the Apostles’ Creed—the best formula of these essential opinions—might assume that he is a saved man; but how soon would he discover by his inmost consciousness, that if to be saved is to be “renewed in the spirit of his mind,” to “pass from death unto life,” he is not yet saved. Should he look out upon the nominal Christian world, he might indeed find some encouragement for his delusion; for he will see that doctrinal orthodoxy—creeds and traditions, with their attendant ceremonies—compose the religion of millions. But a severer observation will show him that the so-called faith of these millions does not purify their hearts and lives; that it often perverts them, producing bigotry rather than charity. If he pursues farther his search in the record, he will find this sort of faith expressly

declared to be fatally deficient. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble." There is no scepticism in hell; perfect orthodoxy reigns there; more profound and universal orthodoxy than has ever been known on the earth.

Third. What, then, can the genuine faith be? he asks, as he continues his research. And he at last finds the answer, "With *the heart* man believeth unto righteousness." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and *believe in thine heart* that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The Ethiopian nobleman believed, doctrinally, the exposition of Philip in the chariot, and wished to be baptized; but Philip demanded more than this. "If thou believest *with all thy heart*, thou mayest." And in the heart also begin all real defections from the faith. "An evil *heart of unbelief* in departing from the living God."

Here then is a distinctive fact. Evangelical or saving faith takes in intellectual faith indeed, but transcends it by comprehending also the heart. It is a mighty, a pervasive principle, including the whole spiritual man—the conviction of the understanding, the assent of the will, the consent

of the heart; the latter being the determining point of its efficacy. We all understand what is meant by the heart—it implies our affections as contrasted with our pure intellections. The faith of the heart therefore presupposes the conviction and contrition of the conscience, which are the essence of repentance; it presupposes an anxious desire to be saved; that the soul “asks,” “seeks,” “knocks” in prayer. It implies more, for it includes *trust*. This is its peculiar characteristic. It is an appropriating power, by which the provisions of the gospel are claimed personally by the believer. He believes not only that Christ died for the sins of the world, but for *my* sins; not only that “who-soever believeth in Christ shall be saved,” but that *I*, now believing in him, *am* saved. “This faith is, in fine,” says a good authority, “such a trust in Christ and apprehension of his merits, by the power of the Holy Spirit, as leads us to come unto Christ, to receive Christ, and to commit the keeping of our souls into his hands, in humble confidence of his ability and willingness to save us.” It is not the meritorious, but the conditional or instrumental cause of our salvation. “Its connection with the benefit arises from the merit of Christ and the promise of God; but if

Christ had not merited, God had not promised ; if God had not promised, justification had never followed upon this faith ; so that the indissoluble connection of Faith and Justification is from God's institution, whereby he has bound himself to give the benefit on the performance of the condition."

Such, then, is this extraordinary, this gracious distinction of Christianity. Distinction, I say, for I find nothing identical with it in any system of heathenism, of philosophical morality, or of natural religion. It becomes now an interesting question, *Why has God so constituted the Christian system as to make faith thus indispensably necessary to it*—the condition of all its personal, saving efficacy ? There may be many occult reasons for this fact, but there are many also which are quite probable, and which show that the "foolishness" of the gospel, in this respect, is the "wisdom and power of God." Let us glance at a few of them.

This habitual exercise of faith, so habitual that the devout man "lives" and "walks" by faith, *puts him in harmony with the mysterious difficulties of the Christian system.* It is not only a fact, but it is a necessity of Christianity that it has mysteries. It is a necessity of any religion entitled

to the name. Nothing can be a more conclusive self-refutation of a supposed religion than that it ignores mysteries. Religion must be founded upon our relations to the invisible, the spiritual universe. Can these be fully known in this world? The planet upon which man, vainly making such a demand, lives only as a flitting insect, is, compared with the known material universe, but as a particle of sand compared with the planet itself. As well might the animalcula, millions of which live in a drop of water and know nothing beyond it, lift its infinitesimal head and deny the universe, as for man to deny, or demand fully to know, the infinite spiritual system which centres in God, and comprehends eternity. By attempting to look at the sun, our sight may be dazzled into incurable blindness ; but we can see all the surrounding glories of nature in his reflected splendor. The microscopic eye of the insect never beholds the sun, and it knows nothing of that orb, but it sees clearly its little way by his diffused light. We "cannot find out God ;" and there are a thousand shining mysteries which may only confound our intellectual vision if we attempt to scan them, but their radiations may fill the heavens and the earth of our being

with resplendence and beauty, kindling the mountain tops, illuminating the valleys, tinting the lowliest flowers at our feet, and decking the very clouds above our heads.

The very primordial idea of religion is the most overwhelming of mysteries—the idea of God, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, from eternity to eternity. What, then, can be more irrational, in religious speculation, than what is called “rationalism?” What more practically preposterous than the demand that in a divine, that is to say, a revealed religion, knowledge should be substituted in the place of faith? What more rational, in fine, than faith itself? As a disciplinary condition of our moral life, its importance, then, is obvious; and it is a striking “internal evidence” of Christianity that a condition, without which its whole theoretical system would dissolve before the inquiring and baffled mind, is wrought into every experimental process and every practical duty of the system, and the purified soul thus trained to an habitual accordance with its sublime, its necessary mysteries.

Farther. Faith, as I have defined it, *secures vitality and energy to personal religion*. The inspiration of the Divine Spirit is indeed the life of

a devout soul ; but this inspiration itself is conditioned on faith. Faith gives directness to all the "means of grace." He that has it prays, he does not merely say prayers ; his faith mixes with the hearing or reading of the Word, and makes it the power of God unto his salvation ; he does not rejoice over a "precious promise" merely with gratitude for its general bountifulness, but appropriates it as his own. This is mine, he exclaims by faith, as directly mine as if given to me alone—and yet the more "precious" because all may share it ; Christ died as personally for me, as if, when stricken with his agony, he looked from the cross directly upon me, and died for none other than me. That he died for all renders his mediation not less personal, but only more gracious. Such a believer partakes of the holy sacraments not as physical vehicles of grace ; he needs no theories of transubstantiation or consubstantiation ; he rests not in forms, though they be even sacramental ; they are but aids to his faith, as I have said, to enable him to apprehend Christ more effectively. Thus there is directness and energy, "spirit and life," in all the forms of his religion. And is this nothing ? Is it not indeed "tasting of the powers

of the world to come?" Is it not the real distinction between a saint and a pharisee? Hence is it that "without faith it is impossible to please him;" that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

I further see in this doctrine of faith a *peculiar adaptation of Christianity to special exigencies of our condition as a fallen race*. A religion of mere morals or "good works" would be a law of condemnation to many of the most affecting cases of human suffering and peril. What hope could we offer to the aged penitent, in the eleventh hour, if such were Christianity? What time, what strength has he, when life is flickering out in its socket, to prepare himself by good works, or a useful career, to enter into the presence of angels and of God? And not such only, but the millions who in earlier life languish on beds of death—how can they, virtually excluded from life, be saved by any system of works, or "self-culture?" And how with the thousands whose guilty lives bring them to death on the gallows? Shall we say that these are all hopeless? Should your pastors turn away from your homes where your unconverted children or aged parents are dying in penitence; or from the cells of your prisons, where trembling guilt awaits the execu-

tioner; should they say that they have no message of mercy from God to these extreme yet common cases, you would denounce them as recreant to the most urgent duties of their office. "Hasten thither," you would say, "there if any where you are needed; thither would your Master go were he on the earth, for he came to seek and save the lost."

There is peril, I know, in such views, but what doctrine of mercy is not perilous to depraved man? There is not an unconverted man here to-night that would not begin to call upon God could I prove to him that, by the midnight hour, he should be called into eternity. It is by the hope of longer life, by an abuse therefore of the forbearance of God, that he is able to sit here unconcerned while the "wrath of God abides upon him." Let no man abuse the divine compassion, as revealed in the comfortable truth I am now discussing, for "he that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." But while we qualify, we will not deny the truth. There is mercy in the eleventh hour for repentant man. And, as if God would reprove any doubt of it, he has exemplified it in the greatest

exhibition of his compassion which the universe ever witnessed. The very scene of our general redemption was accompanied with an instance of such special mercy. To the dying thief upon the cross, said the dying Christ, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" and when the herald angels bade the everlasting gates lift up their heads and let the King of Glory enter, the astonished heavens saw, following in his glorious ascension, this rescued soul, the first trophy of his finished redemption. Why this signal instance? Why, but that God would display his infinite compassion before all eyes that should ever look toward the cross of his Son; would assure the hearts of all contrite men, however guilty, that "a broken and contrite heart he will not despise;" and would forbid his people to despair of any wreck of humanity that has not yet utterly sunk into the abyss? There is hope then for even such, I repeat; but where else than in the Christian system? And where there, except in the doctrine that "by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

Precisely here is the place to affirm, as a further reason for this peculiar constitution of the

evangelical system, *that faith is a more effectual guarantee of sound morality, or "good works,"* than could be any mere ethical system of religion. Fatally dangerous, to all the legitimate ends of religion, would the doctrine otherwise be. The Gospel, declaring salvation only by faith, is nevertheless acknowledged to be the most perfect ethical system ever known to man; and its expounders, who are distinguished as "evangelical," by preaching this doctrine of faith, are the most zealous preachers of practical righteousness. . Nor are they self-contradictory in this respect; for the faith they preach is not a dead faith; but "faith without works is dead." Faith, as I have defined it, is an operative and powerful principle, giving directness and energy to the inner, spiritual life; how can it fail then to give vigor to the outward moral life? Can organic life exist without the activity of the organs of life? A living faith must spontaneously produce a practically holy life. Works are the essential fruits and proofs of faith. The Scriptures, teaching that faith is the only condition of salvation, declare, nevertheless, that faith is essentially practical. "Faith which *worketh* by love;" "your *work* of faith;" "the *work* of

faith with power ;" "I will show thee my faith by my *works* ;" "who through faith *wrought righteousness* ;" "the *obedience* of faith." "Do we then make void the law by faith ? God forbid ; yea, we *establish* the law."

And the fact thus logically and scripturally evident is also historically true. The man who lives by faith, rejecting all reliance upon self-righteousness, is generally found to be the most active Christian in the private and public duties of religion ; his faith apprehends the love of Christ, and "the love of Christ constraineth him," and thus his faith "*worketh* by love." The denominations made up of such Christians, and whose pulpits and symbols most insist on the doctrine of faith, have always been, and are to-day, the most active in the promotion of the Gospel and of the charities of humanity. The rationalism, or the pharisaism, which rejects this doctrine, seems indeed, to have an immediately paralyzing influence on the higher forms of Christian activity. They extinguish the apostolic zeal. They fail almost utterly of the great work specifically committed to the church, the extension of the Gospel in the world ; while churches, which disclaim the merit of works, are

nevertheless, to-day, working and suffering, by their representatives, all around the world, for the honor of their Lord and the salvation of their fellow men.

We see another reason for this peculiarity of the Christian system, in the fact *that it precludes "spiritual pride" and self-righteousness*. An old writer has said, "One reason, we may humbly conceive, of God's fixing this condition of justification, was to *hide pride from man*. Pride had already destroyed the very angels of God, had cast down a third part of the stars of heaven. It was likewise, in great measure, owing to this, when the tempter said, 'Ye shall be as Gods,' that Adam fell from his own steadfastness, and brought sin and death into the world. It was, therefore, an instance of wisdom worthy of God, to appoint such a condition of reconciliation, for him and all his posterity, as might effectually humble, might abase them to the dust. And such is faith. It is peculiarly fitted for this end; for he that cometh unto God by this faith, must fix his eye singly on his own wickedness, on his guilt and helplessness, without having the least regard to any supposed good in himself, to any virtue or righteousness whatsoever. He must

come as a *mere sinner*, inwardly and outwardly, self-destroyed and self-condemned, bringing nothing to God but ungodliness only, pleading nothing of his own but sin and misery. Thus it is and thus alone, when his *mouth is stopped*, and he stands *utterly guilty before God*, that he can look unto Jesus, as the whole and sole propitiation for his sins. Thus only can he 'be found in him,' and receive the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Such is Faith, its importance in the Christian life, and its reasonableness.

It is not only one of the highest distinctions, but one of the highest vindications of Christianity; the "Wisdom of God;"—an element of power, securing effectiveness to the forms of religion, energy to the Christian life, and spiritual vitality to the morals of common life,—a doctrine of consolation, making possible to the most desolate exigencies of penitent men the hopes of the Gospel, and exalting the hearts of devout men, to tranquil harmony with the sublime, the often appalling but inevitable mysteries of the spiritual world;—a motive of holy humility lifting man up into the glories of heaven, and yet laying him there, in utter self-abnegation and

prostration, at the foot of his God. A more rational, or a more necessary, or a more sublime maxim was never given to our wrecked and struggling world, than that, uttered by its divine Deliverer, "Have faith in God." Without it we can neither live, nor die, as should immortal beings; we perish. With it, our fallen humanity can have the "victory that overcometh the world," and that triumphs, through the gates of death, into the gates of heaven.



Justification by Faith.

BY THE

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VII.

"Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."—Rom. iii. 28.

THERE are some truths lying at the foundation of all religion, which neither require nor admit of proof; for they are either intuitive, or do so commend themselves to the human mind as to be universally acknowledged. Amongst these truths are the following :

1. That the distinction between the affections and actions of men, expressed by the words *right* and *wrong*, is founded in the nature of things. Like the distinction between the *true* and the *untrue*, it is universally made, and is felt to be real. Concerning what things are true and what are untrue, men differ widely; and so do they differ on questions of right and wrong. But no one doubts that both distinctions are real and most important.

2. A second truth, intimately connected with that just stated, and no less intuitive, is,—that men are under obligation to do the right and to

avoid doing the wrong. So soon as the distinction between right and wrong is admitted, the obligation to do the right and avoid the wrong is felt. The approbation of the conscience follows the doing of what is believed to be right, and a sense of guilt follows the doing of what is believed to be wrong. These feelings are universally experienced.

3. These truths being admitted, it follows that there is a law which is the measure or exponent of human obligation. Paul the apostle uttered an intuitive truth, when he said—"Where there is no law, there is no transgression." We but express the same truth in another form, when we say, where there is no law, there is no obligation. It follows, that where there is obligation there is law, and consequently a lawgiver, who has the right to claim the obedience of men. Therefore it is true, that the Gentiles, when they "do by nature the things contained in the law," do "show the work of the law written in their hearts."

4. From these three truths a fourth follows logically, viz.: that either in this world or in the future state, men must give account to God of their moral conduct, and receive the just reward.

Every law has sanctions as well as precepts; and there can be no doubt that God will reward obedience to his law, and punish disobedience. And since it is apparent that men are not treated according to their conduct in this world, the almost universal conviction of mankind has been, that the future state is to be one of rewards and punishments. Thus are we brought inevitably to the great truth so clearly taught in the Scriptures, that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Out of these truths arises a question of infinite moment to us all, viz.: On what ground can we reasonably expect, when called before the tribunal of God, to receive sentence of acquittal, not of condemnation? Eternal interests depend upon the true answer to this question, and there are few reflecting minds that have not, at one time or another, been seriously agitated by it. This question the apostle discusses in the first part of this epistle, and the text expresses the conclusion he reaches, viz.: "We conclude, therefore, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

The subject to which attention is now invited, is the doctrine of Justification—a doctrine justly regarded by Luther as *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*—the article by which the church stands or falls.

Our first inquiry is respecting the meaning of the term *justification*. Used with reference to government, human or divine, it is a sentence of law in favor of one tried by the law to which he is amenable, and found not guilty. The sentence in such a case is, that, judged by the law, he is guiltless, and is, therefore, entitled to its protection. The words *justification* and *justify* are sometimes used in a popular sense, as when it is said, "Wisdom is justified (*i. e.* approved) of her children." But we are now inquiring respecting its meaning in connection with accountable creatures under law. In such connection it is nothing more nor less than a sentence of the law in favor of the party on trial. It stands, therefore, as the antithesis of *condemnation*, which is a sentence of law against one tried and convicted of crime, and subjected to the legal penalty. We find these terms employed in the sense just explained, in Deut. xxv. 1: "If there be a controversy between men, and they

come unto judgment that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked." That is, they shall pronounce sentence according to the merits of the case, in favor of the righteous and against the wicked. These terms are employed in the same sense in the eighth chapter of this epistle : "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?"

It is important here to notice the difference between *justification* and *pardon*. In justification the law speaks, and its sentence is executed ; in mere pardon the law is set aside. A man, for example, tried on charge of murder, is convicted and sentenced to die. The governor of the state, by virtue of a power vested in him, may pardon the criminal, but he cannot justify him. He may declare that the sentence of the law in this particular case shall not be executed, and thus, so far as this case is concerned, the law is annulled. But the law has spoken, and its sentence is one of condemnation ; and the governor, though he may set aside the sentence, cannot compel it to give an opposite sentence.

There are two valid reasons why, in every

human government, there should be a pardoning power. In the first place, all human legislation is imperfect, and, consequently, the strict execution of the law would, in many cases, be unjust. In the second place, the administration of human law is very imperfect; so that, in the name of the law, the greatest injustice is often perpetrated. Ignorance, prejudice, passion, interest, constantly influence the decisions of courts and the verdicts of juries. There should, therefore, be a pardoning power lodged somewhere. But in the government of God, there can never be a case of simple pardon; for there are no reasons to justify it, and there are strong reasons against it. There is no imperfection in the law of God. It is "holy and just and good." And there is no imperfection in the administration of his law. There can, therefore, be no reason for setting aside a sentence of a perfect law, perfectly administered—a sentence perfectly just. Even human-governments, notwithstanding the obvious propriety of a pardoning power, are weakened, and thus vice is encouraged, whenever that power is frequently exercised; and the people cry out against the governor as abusing his power to the encouragement

of crime and the injury of the country. How much more injurious would be the setting aside of the sentence of a perfect law perfectly administered. A governor, when granting pardons, may say that he does not design to encourage vice, but merely to prevent injustice being done in the name of the law—that he sets aside the sentence of the law only in cases where, through defects in the law or in the administration of it, persons are suffering wrongly. But this could not be said, were the sentence of the Divine law set aside; for in such a case confessedly no injustice is done. A mere pardon, therefore, would not only dishonor the glorious Judge, but would tend strongly to encourage transgression. In the government of God, consequently, there can never be a case of mere pardon. In every case there must be either condemnation or justification. “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.” Math. v. 18.

In view of these truths, the question recurs with increasing interest: On what ground can any one of Adam’s race expect, when he shall stand before the tribunal of God, a sentence of justification and not of condemnation? This

question assumes a yet graver aspect, when we remember, that a sentence of justification can be given only in view of a righteousness which fully meets all the claims of the law. Compromises are inconsistent with the very nature of law. A debtor cannot secure a sentence of justification by proving that he has paid three-fourths or nine-tenths of what he owes. The language of the law is, "Pay what thou owest." A criminal cannot secure acquittal by proving that the crime charged is the first and only crime he has committed. The law can be satisfied with nothing short of uniform, perfect obedience. Consequently, every accountable creature of God must be justified, if justified at all, either on the ground of having himself rendered perfect obedience to the law, or on the ground of a perfect righteousness which he is able to offer. How shall any one of our fallen race secure such a righteousness? Or, what is the legal or meritorious ground on which a man may be justified before God? To this most important inquiry I now invite particular attention.

I. No human being will be justified, either wholly or partially, on the ground of his good works. The statement is strongly made, but it

is not more sweeping than truth requires. There are two classes of righteous works mentioned in the Scriptures, viz. : works or deeds of the law and good works. The former are such as might be performed under a purely legal dispensation. Angels keep the law of God perfectly, and therefore are justified by the deeds of the law. And Paul speaks of the deeds of the law thus : "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them." Good works, as distinguished from "the deeds of the law," are works performed by Christians. They are the fruit of regeneration, and are works of faith. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." Neither of these classes of works can constitute any part of the legal ground of the justification of men before God. Why not ?

1. Because, previous to regeneration by the Holy Spirit and the exercise of faith in Christ, men do not perform any good works. I do not mean to say, that they perform no works which, as to the overt acts, are good or useful ; but they perform no works such as the law by which

they are to be tried, demands. The claims of the moral law are not exclusively or chiefly upon the overt acts of men, but upon their affections. Every moral action takes its character from the motives or the affections which prompt it. So true is this, that an action in itself good may become criminal in consequence of the motive in which it originates. The Scribes and Pharisees gave alms. The act was good in itself. But they gave alms, not because they regarded the law of God, nor that they cared for the poor, but to be seen of men. They desired human applause, and they sought it in this way. Our Lord said significantly, "They have their reward." Every good work possesses at least two qualities, viz. : it is a work which is directly or indirectly commanded of God ; and it is performed from right motives. No work can be properly called good, unless done in obedience to God ; nor bad, unless it is a violation of his law. Every good work, moreover, must be prompted by love to God and love to man ; for "love is the fulfilling of the law." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength ; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as

thyself." This is the requirement of the law, and this is holiness. Most emphatically is this truth taught by Paul in that beautiful chapter on *charity*: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."* Charity is nothing but love—love to God and men; and without it all works are valueless.

Then the question must be, whether any of the human race really love God before they are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. They do not, "because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh can not please God." All are either in the flesh or in the Spirit. Those who are in the Spirit are regenerated, and the Spirit of

* 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3.

God dwells in them. All others are in the flesh, and can not please God. Manifestly, then, they do no good works. "Ungodly," "sinners," "enemies," are the terms by which the Apostle Paul describes unconverted men. Can good works flow from such a source? Nay—but evil works do. So that whilst unregenerate men have no good works to present before God, they have innumerable evil works. For, all the days of their lives, since accountable age, they have been exercising moral affections and performing moral actions which were not good. How alarming, then, the condition of such men, if called before the tribunal of God. Having no good works, it is clear that they cannot be justified wholly or partially on the ground of such works. Being chargeable with innumerable evil works, the guilt of which is aggravated by the light they have possessed and the blessings they have enjoyed, they must meet with a fearful condemnation.

2. I am constrained to go further, and to maintain, that even the 'good works of believers will constitute no part of the legal ground of their justification. It is true, that Christians do perform works comparatively good; but there

are three valid reasons why those works can constitute no part of the legal ground of their justification.

1st. The first reason is, that mingled with their good works are many works that are positively bad. Such was Peter's denial of his Saviour. Such was David's adultery and his treatment of Uriah. "In many things," says the apostle James, "we offend all." Now, the law, from its very nature, knows nothing of compromise. It demands obedience constant and complete. It cannot weigh the good and bad works of men, and estimate and reward the good in the final judgment. One murder forfeits to the perpetrator of it all claims to the protection of the law to which a life of upright conduct had entitled him. We must, then, either satisfy the demands of the law fully, or we must abandon our works as the ground of justification, and seek acceptance on other grounds.

2d. Even those works of believers which are good, are but imperfectly good. Believers are not yet perfectly sanctified ; and imperfect holiness in the heart can not produce perfect obedience in the life. Our love is imperfect, and so, consequently, is our "labor of love." Our

faith is mixed with unbelief. Our daily experience teaches us how to sympathize with the anxious father who entreated the Saviour to heal his son, and who, when the granting of the request was made to depend upon his faith, exclaimed, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." Here was true faith; but it was mingled with unbelief. We walk by faith; we work by faith; and imperfect faith can produce only imperfect obedience. In a word, all our Christian graces are imperfect; and, therefore, our Christian obedience is also imperfect. But, as we have seen, the law, from its very nature, can accept of nothing short of perfect obedience. So far from rewarding that which is good in our works, it would condemn and punish the imperfection which adheres to them all. There is, in our best works, enough of imperfection to condemn us.

3d. So far as the works of believers are good, grace made them so. Left to themselves, they would have lived and died in rebellion against God. Not even the mighty motives of the gospel would have been sufficient to turn them from sin to God. The effective influence of the Holy Spirit was necessary to enable and dispose them

to perform good works. Every true believer rejoices to adopt the sentiments of the Apostle Paul, when speaking of his good works : " By the grace of God I am what I am ; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain ; but I labored more abundantly than they all ; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."* How remarkable the language ! " I labored ; yet I did not labor." It was not Paul, but grace, that performed the good works. Our salvation, he again argues, cannot be of works ; " for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."† Our good works are not the cause or ground of our salvation, but the effects or fruits of a salvation all of grace.

Now, we are either under law or under grace ; and we can not bring forward the works which grace enabled and disposed us to perform, and, placing them under the law, claim a legal reward. We can not produce such works, and say to God in view of them, " Pay me what thou owest." Nay, we are debtors to him for the grace that enabled and inclined us to do good works. He is not, therefore, debtor to us for the works. If any one has abounded in good works, it is only

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

† Eph. ii. 10.

because God first abounded to him in grace. The more abundant our good works, therefore, the greater our indebtedness to Divine grace, and the more reason have we gratefully to sing,

“ O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be !”

II. The question recurs with growing interest, on what ground, since our works are wholly excluded, can we expect to be justified before God ? The true answer is given in the text : “ We conclude, that a man is justified by faith.” Then faith must be able to furnish us with a righteousness commensurate with the claims of the law. Faith is not itself a righteousness. It is simply the act or exercise of a helpless being trusting in one who is able to help. For the purposes of justification, it is the act of a guilty being trusting in the righteousness of another. The faith of the penitent sinner rests upon Jesus Christ ; and his finished righteousness is the true and only ground of justification.

Here we meet with the principle of substitution—a principle well understood in civil law. A man owes a thousand dollars, but has nothing wherewith to pay. The law can not forgive the debt, but it may be legally paid by a friend of

the debtor, who has the means. The payment made by the substitute as fully satisfies the claims of the law, as if it had been made by the debtor himself. Human governments can not allow the principle of substitution in *criminal* cases, for two reasons. In the first place, the man who might consent to die for his friend, condemned as a murderer, has no right thus to dispose of his life. It is not his own. Secondly, such a substitution would turn a murderer loose on society to commit other murders. But these reasons do not lie against the substitution of Christ in the place of sinners. For, first, he had the right to dispose of his life. He said, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."* And, secondly, when he secures justification to a sinner, he imparts sanctification also. He does not let loose a criminal to do more mischief; but he sends forth a regenerated soul to become a blessing to others. This divine substitution, therefore, is productive of good only.

The doctrine of the Scriptures is, that Jesus Christ, by his obedience unto death, did fully satisfy the demands of the law of God for all

* John x. 18.

who trust in him; and that they are justified, not on the ground that they have obeyed the law, but on the ground of his perfect obedience in their behalf. The truth of the doctrine just stated is clear,

1. From the position assumed by our Saviour, when he became incarnate. "But when the fulness of time was come," says Paul, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."* Those whom he designed to save, were under the law, and, as sinners, were under the curse of the law.† To deliver them from the curse, and secure for them justification unto life and adoption into God's family, he placed himself under the law. He became the surety for them, thus obligating himself to satisfy its demands against them. When a man voluntarily endorses the note of his bankrupt friend, the law regards and treats him as the debtor. Even so was Jesus Christ treated as if he had been a sinner. Therefore Paul says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,"‡ And again,

* Gal. iv. 4, 5.

† Gal. iii. 10.

‡ Gal. iii. 13.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* The penitent sinner is justified, therefore, solely on the ground that Jesus Christ satisfied the claims of the law for him.

2. This doctrine is very distinctly taught in the same chapter in which our text is found. After proving that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, the apostle adds : " But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe."† When a sinner exercises faith in Christ, he receives a righteousness, without having kept the law, which secures his justification. " For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."‡

3. No less clearly is this doctrine taught in that remarkable prediction of the advent and sufferings of Christ, found in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. " But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities :

* 2 Cor. v. 21.

† Rom. iii. 21, 22.

‡ Rom. x. 4.

the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." In what sense is it true, that the iniquities of men were laid on Christ ? They were laid on him just as the debts of a bankrupt are laid on the security. The latter is treated as if he were the debtor, and is required to make the legal payment. Thus did Christ give his life a ransom for many ; and by the stripes—the penal sufferings inflicted on him, we enjoy justification and peace with God. " Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

4. This doctrine only can account for the peculiarity of the sufferings of Christ. He was " a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." But as he approached the close of his life on earth, a deeper gloom seemed to settle upon him ; and after he had administered to his disciples the Supper, " he began to be sorrowful and very heavy." What a mysterious, fearful agony of mind was that which extorted from the uncomplaining Son of God the declaration, " My soul

* Rom. v. 1.

is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The crown of thorns was not yet rudely pressed on his sacred head. The nails had not yet been driven through his hands and his feet. Yet was there in his soul an anguish under which life must soon expire. So dreadful was his agony, that whilst he fell prostrate on the ground again and again, and prayed that the bitter cup might, if possible, pass from his lips, "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." And whilst he hung on the cross, the darkness of midnight seemed to settle down upon his soul, as he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" What means all this fearful agony of mind? If Jesus Christ had been a great teacher and martyr only, he would have been the most triumphant of all martyrs, and an example to all others. The words and the notes of joy and triumph would have been on his lips. But whilst tens of thousands of his followers have met death in its most terrific forms with songs of joy, not a word was uttered by him expressive of joy. Whilst the light of God's countenance has shone upon the souls of dying believers, filling them with inexpressible peace, he was forsaken of God in the hour of

his extremity. How shall we account for these things ? Only by acknowledging the great truth that he was not a martyr, but a victim. He stood in the place of sinners ; and, therefore, he was treated as if he had been a sinner. God laid upon him the iniquity of us all. He drank to the dregs the bitter cup which we must have drunk. And when, about to expire, he said, " It is finished ;" he meant that the great work was accomplished ; the great debt was paid ; the demands of the violated law were satisfied ; and his righteousness was declared, that God " might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."* " Therefore," saith the apostle, " we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

The view of this great subject now exhibited, will enable us to understand the different aspects of justification presented in the Scriptures.

1. We can now understand in what sense we are justified by *knowledge*. " By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many."† Men are justified by the knowledge of Christ, inasmuch as the truth concerning him received into the mind, thus becoming knowledge, leads

* Rom. iii. 26.

† Isaiah liii. 11.

them to him. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?"* The Scriptures contain an extensive system of truth, embracing all that man needs to know in order to justification and salvation; and of this system Christ crucified is the centre and soul. Therefore, Paul, whilst he shunned not to declare "the whole counsel of God," said to the Corinthian Christians, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."† And our Lord said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."‡ Knowledge, then, is the light that guides us to Christ; and through it we are made to feel our need of him, and are persuaded to receive him. Therefore, "the preaching of the cross," which is simply teaching the knowledge of Christ, is the power of God and the wisdom of God to salvation.

2. We can now understand in what sense men are justified by *faith*. Faith secures to them justification, because it receives Christ as he is offered in the gospel. It is one thing to know Christ; another to receive and rest upon him.

* Rom. x. 14.

† 1 Cor. ii. 2.

‡ John xvii. 3.

"He came to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."* This faith embraces in it the intellectual knowledge of Christ, the heart's approbation of him and his work, and the soul's simple trust in him as the only Saviour from sin and its consequences. Faith, then, is the *instrumental*, not the meritorious, cause of justification. It is the exercise of a guilty, helpless being casting himself on him who is "able to save to the uttermost," thus accepting a gracious justification.

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall.
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all."

3. And now we can understand in what sense men are justified by *grace*. The language of Paul on this point is very strong, as if his purpose was to exclude all idea of human merit. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being freely justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."† A justification that is by grace, can

* John i. 11, 12.

† Rom. iii. 23, 24.

not but be free ; yet the apostle strengthens the idea by an unusual repetition—*freely justified by grace*. Grace, as the word is used in connection with the gospel method of salvation, means the favor of God to guilty men. Their justification is wholly of grace,

1st. Inasmuch as the plan of salvation originated in grace. God was under no obligation to offer salvation to our guilty race. The whole plan, embracing the mission and work of Christ, was devised by infinite love. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.”* It was amazing compassion that brought the Son of God to our lost world, to die the just for the unjust. “For,” saith Paul, “ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”†

2d. It is the grace of God that enables and disposes sinful man to exercise that faith by which they are justified. Saving faith is the exercise of a renewed heart ; and regeneration is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit. “For

* John iii. 16.

† 2 Cor. viii. 9.

by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* Left to themselves, all men would reject the offer of salvation through Jesus Christ. Of those who received him it is expressly declared, that they were “born of God.”† In nothing does God more display the riches of his grace, than in quickening into life those who were dead in trespasses and sins. “But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace are ye saved.”‡ .

3d. The act of God in justifying the believer, who is most unworthy, is an act of grace. When David plead for the pardon of his sins, he appealed to the multitude of God’s tender mercies. God provides the glorious substitute ; he disposes and enables the sinner to receive him, and when he does receive him, he fully justifies him. Justification, therefore, is eminently an act of God’s grace.

4. But there is a sense in which the penitent believer is justified by *works*. For, whilst his

* Eph. ii. 8, 9.

† John i. 11-13.

‡ Eph. ii. 4, 5.

works constitute no part of the legal ground of justification; they are the fruit of faith, and the evidence that it is a living, not a dead faith. Indeed, faith itself is a work. It is the first act of obedience, and the cause of all other obedience. Therefore, when the Jews asked our Lord, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" he answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."* Not only is it true, that faith prompts to good works, but our works, in themselves imperfect, are accepted of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

We can now see the perfect consistency of the teaching of Paul and James on this subject, concerning which so much has been written. Paul teaches, that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." The deeds of the law, as already explained, are deeds performed in obedience to the law by creatures who are under the law. But Paul says to believers, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace."† The works of believers, therefore, are in no proper sense "deeds of the law." But their *good works* have an intimate connection

* John vi. 28, 29.

† Rom. vi. 15.

with their justification. Such works are the evidence of the genuineness of that faith which receives Christ, and secures through his righteousness justification of life. As faith is the *instrumental* cause of justification, works may be said to be the *evidential* cause.

But it is most important to observe, that Paul and James were combatting opposite errors. Hence the apparent conflict between their teachings. Paul encountered a class of men who said, "We do not need to exercise faith in the righteousness of another in order to justification; for our works are sufficient." He demonstrated that they could not be justified by their works, because they were not such as the law demands. James met with those who said, "We do not need to perform good works, because we expect to be justified simply by faith." He answered, that they could not be justified by faith without works; because true faith will always produce good works. The faith which does not produce such works, is dead; and a dead faith can not save the soul. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body ; what doth it profit ? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." When Abraham, at the Divine command, offered Isaac on the altar, his faith manifested itself by his works. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect." Faith is the cause ; works are the effect. The cause is not perfect without its effect. A cause which produces no effect, is no cause. Faith which produces no works, is no faith. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."* The body without the spirit is not the man. The soul is the man ; the body is the form. When Abraham showed his faith by his obedience, then he was justified, not by faith which produces no works, but by faith with works. Thus his works were, not the meritorious, but the evidential cause of his justification. It is true, as Paul teaches, that men can not be justified "by the deeds of the law," or by the merit of works ; and it is true, as James

* James ii. 26.

teaches, that they can not be justified without works. The two apostles taught the same doctrine.

We are justified by *knowledge* ; we are justified by *faith* ; we are justified by *grace* ; we are justified by *works*. The whole subject may be illustrated thus : A man is seriously ill. He receives a letter from a friend, in which he is told of a medicine which will effect a cure. He takes it according to directions, and is restored to health. Giving an account of the cure, he may say, "I was cured by the *knowledge* received by the letter of my friend." Or he may say, "I was cured by my *faith* in my friend ;" since he would not have used the remedy but for his confidence in his friend. Or he may say, "I was cured by the *kindness* (*grace*) of my friend ;" since it was his kindness which induced him to write the letter. Or he may say, "I was cured by taking the medicine (*works*) ;" since his knowledge, his faith, and the kindness of his friend would have availed nothing, if he had not actually taken the medicine according to the directions received.

From the subject as now presented, the following conclusions are warranted :

1. The Scripture doctrine of justification perfectly harmonizes justice and grace. The great question which arose from the fallen condition of man was, How can God maintain his justice, supporting the claims of his perfect law, and yet exercise grace towards sinners? Should the law take its course, all were lost forever; for "the wages of sin is death." Should grace extend forgiveness, the law must be virtually annulled, the throne of God dishonored, and rebellion encouraged. How shall the jarring claims of justice and grace be reconciled? How shall the law be sustained, and sinners saved? Neither human nor angelic wisdom could solve the difficult problem. But a voice comes from the throne of God, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God."* It is the voice of the eternal Son of God. He pities lost men, and comes to their rescue. He can not annul the law they have transgressed; he cannot set aside the claims of justice. But he will assume our

* Ps. xl. 6, 7.

nature, and in that nature he will satisfy the claims of the law for his people. Grace comes to satisfy the claims of justice, and then to set the prisoners free ; it proclaims "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Thus "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." The Divine law is more glorious than ever, whilst Divine grace fills earth and heaven with joyful surprise. Well may Paul ask and answer the question, in view of this doctrine, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

2. This is an humbling doctrine. There is no feature of human nature more prominent than the disposition to think highly of its own excellencies. There are few things with which men part so reluctantly, as with their righteousness. All false religions, and all corruptions of true religion, in one way or another, exalt human merit. The doctrine we are considering strikes down human pride. Men have nothing which they can claim as their own, but their sin and their guilt. Believers are justified in view of a perfect righteousness, but it is not their own.

The claims of the law have been fully satisfied, but not by them. Faith confesses guilt and helplessness, and pleads the finished obedience of Christ. Well, therefore, may the apostle ask and answer another question, viz.: "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."

3. This is an *encouraging* doctrine. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." No one is able to do anything to extricate himself from his fearful condition; but the gospel brings us "glad tidings of great joy." It offers conditions of justification which meet the case of the vilest sinner. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." If sinful men turn in terror from the thunders of Sinai, they may safely approach "the throne of grace." If they dare not meet God to be judged by the law, they may rejoice that God is "in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." If they can not perform meritorious works, they may *trust* in the meritorious work of Christ. Faith is the exercise of a guilty,

helpless sinner, falling into the arms of One who is "able to save to the uttermost;" and "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Let the weary, heavy-laden come and find rest.

4. This doctrine is well adapted to fill with gratitude the heart of every believer. Delivered from the sentence of eternal death, they are introduced by faith in Christ "into this grace, wherein they stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* Justification by faith brings peace with God; and it is followed by the adoption of the sinner into the family of God. "For," saith Paul, "ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."† "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."‡ Well may each of us exclaim: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities."§ Let lives of holy obedience, of self-denying labor, express our sense of our obligations to him who loved us, and gave himself for us. And may it be the happiness of every one of us to sing in heaven,

* Rom. v. 1, 2. † Gal. iii. 26. ‡ Rom. viii. 17. § Ps. ciii. 1-3.

“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen.”



Providence and Prayer.

BY THE

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VIII.

"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him."—HEB. xi. 7.

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father.—MATT. x. 30.

"Upholding all things by the word of his power.—HEB. i. 3.

"Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

HEB. iv. 16.

THE recognition of God in his existence—of his eternal, infinite, and immutable perfections, the first cause and last end of all things, and the relation we sustain to him under his moral government, lays at the foundation of all religion—"Of him, and through him, and to him are all things." In wisdom has he made them all. The wisdom that devised and directs, and the power that created upholds all, and his own glory in the illustration of his adorable perfections is developed therein. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night declareth knowledge."

Amid all the works of his hands, and in the succession of all events, there is nothing fortuitous, for "*he doeth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ?*" This lays the foundation for worship, trust, and obedience, and in view of the mediatorial reign of the Divine Redeemer, "Head over all things to the church," conducting the whole work of Providence, opens unfailing sources of consolation to the believer in Christ—"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." It is in view of the universal and constant agency of Divine Providence in all events and at all times, connected with a believing reliance on the grace of the Saviour, we enjoy peace, "dwelling in the secret place of the most High, and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty." Then will be verified the words of the Prophet Isaiah, "*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee, because he trusteth in thee.*" The term *Providence* fitly expresses the divine agency in the direction, control, and issuing of all events both in the physical and moral world. It imports foresight and foreknowledge, indicating the deliberate counsel, and fixed pur-

pose in the exercise of infinite wisdom, “working all things after the counsel of his own will.” The topic assigned to this discourse is PROVIDENCE and PRAYER. It will be seen that it is of a practical character, brought to bear upon Christian privilege and experience, and the discussion must be in that view. There are few topics, to which the combination of the three texts selected refer, which minister so richly to the faith and comfort of God’s children amid the trying vicissitudes of life as this one.

It is proposed to consider—

I. *The Providence of God illustrated and explained.*

II. *The administration of this kingdom of Providence committed to the Divine Redeemer in his mediatorial office.*

III. *The direction and encouragement thence afforded to the exercise of believing prayer.*

I. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD ILLUSTRATED AND EXPLAINED.

It is already stated that the perfections of God exercised in his work of creation imply and require his continued agency in the preservation and government of all his works. Can we for a moment imagine that he who formed this universe

of such. wide extent, of such wondrous order, should leave it to itself and to blind chance, and allow it, for want of his wise and powerful superintendence, to run into disorder and confusion? In the physical world, it is God alone "that binds the sweet influences of Pleiades and looses the bands of Orion, that brings forth Mazzaroth in his season, and guides Arcturus with his sons." The mind is lost in wonder at the wisdom which directs and controls, to human view this almost illimitable extent of created being, and is led to exclaim with the Psalmist, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him." And yet "not a sparrow falls to the ground without the will of our Heavenly Father, and the hairs of our head are all numbered." There are those who deny a *particular* Providence, while they admit a *general* Providence. They admit that God governs the world by general laws, while they do not allow that his agency extends to minute interests and events, as if it were unworthy of him to attend to objects so inconsiderable. But there can be no sentiment so un-

worthy of God as this. To the limited intellect and power of man, in the effort to investigate, comprehend, and act, painful embarrassment and hindrance are produced by the minuteness, number, and extent of the objects presented. But the very being and perfection of God imply his ability, with the same ease with which, by his omnipotent word, he called the universe into existence, to order all the concerns of his dominions in all their extent, the minuteness of the parts, and the variety of their combinations. To him no creature can be considered great or small, because to an infinite being all finite things are as nothing. The doctrine of a general Providence in its very nature and import implies, and proves a particular Providence. What is the whole but the parts which compose it? What is a general Providence but all the particulars which enter within its range? This Providence is exercised in the laws which define and establish what is termed the *order of nature*, which exhibit the wisdom of the Creator and Preserver, and open a field for the study and investigation of his works, leading up from *nature* to *nature's God*. What are the laws of nature but the will and agency of the Creator in continued

operation. His agency continued through the whole of his created universe, directing, and guiding all its movements, sustaining, and governing it, and directing it to the ends devised by infinite wisdom, constitutes the Providence of God, General, and Particular connected together, and blended into one. Thus the acknowledgment of Divine Providence under the laws and order he has ordained always supposes and requires the use of the means with the end. For us to pretend to trust Providence without the use of means is high and provoking presumption, and to trust in the use of means without a dependence on the all-ruling Providence, is impious.

The Providence which pervades the physical world extends its operation through the whole range of intelligence and moral action and accountability. It is in the moral government which God exercises that the glory of his perfections shines forth, and here it is that the mind dwells most readily and profitably upon the direction, control, and government of his intelligent creatures in their moral agency. Without interfering with the free agency of man, or in the least diminishing his responsibility, his Provi-

dence extends to all creatures, and to all their actions. In Acts ii. 23 we read, "Him being delivered by the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge* of God, ye have taken, and *with wicked hands* have crucified and slain;" and again in the fourth chapter, "For a truth against thy Holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles, were gathered together *for to do what thy hand, and thy counsel had before determined to be done.*" Here we see the two principles ever to be kept in view, the wicked fulfilling the purpose and Providence of God, and yet acting with perfect freedom, and with all the guilt of their actions resting upon them. While both these principles are sanctioned by the clearest suggestions of reason, as well as by the explicit declarations of the word of God, it is for us, while unable to explain their harmony, and coöperation to receive them in a quiet, unwavering faith. In another adaptation to believers, how strikingly is the doctrine of God's working in and by us practically enforced: "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*"

Thus, in all the concerns of the world, nothing takes place that is fortuitous or by chance. It is said in Ecclesiastes that "time and chance happen to all men." This only respects *men*. It refers to such occurrences as proceed from causes unknown or unforeseen, or which produce effects wholly unexpected. But what is chance to us, is to God his Providence. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposal thereof is of the Lord."

"All nature is but art unknown to thee
All chance direction, which thou canst not see."

In all events God is exercising his perfections, and will illustrate them to his glory in their final issues. While he will make "all things to work together for good to them who love him, and are called according to his purpose," he will also "cause the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath will he restrain."

But what is the ground on which the doctrine of the universal and all-pervading Providence of God furnishes trust and consolation to man fallen by iniquity, and whose condition is invaded by sin, sorrow, and death.

This leads us to consider—

II. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THIS PROVIDENCE COMMITTED TO THE DIVINE REDEEMER IN HIS MEDIATORIAL OFFICE.

God has established his throne in the heavens, ever resplendent in holiness, and established in justice, and judgment. He is the law-giver and the judge. Sin has entered into the world, and death by sin. "Now, what the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." The law rightly understood and applied, convinces and condemns, sealing under condemnation. But while "the law came by Moses, truth and grace came by Jesus Christ." "Mercy and truth went before him." Our sins have separated us greatly and far from our God. But "we are brought nigh by the blood of the cross." A new and living way is opened into the holiest of all, free of access to every sinner repenting and believing, consecrated by atoning blood. God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and is founding a kingdom of grace on earth, over which, he "who died for our sins, and is raised for our justification," is exalted and crowned "*Lord of all*," having all authority in heaven and

earth, "Head over all things for his Church." His humiliation and sufferings bearing the price of redemption preceding his exaltation and glory, laid the foundation for his mediatorial reign and kingly office.

In the second Psalm, quoted in the New Testament, we read, "*I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree, Thou art my Son. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*" So also in the 110th Psalm, quoted in the New Testament, "*The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.*" In the words of our text, Heb., i. 3: The Redeemer is represented as "upholding all things by the word of his power," in connection with and resulting from his atoning suffering: "*When he had himself purged our sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.*" The scope of the epistle to the Hebrews is to elucidate, and establish the reality, perfection,

and efficacy of the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and commences in this first chapter with stating his divine glory as "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" and, quoting from the Old Testament, emphatically proves the supremacy and stability of his throne, and the immutability of his character and work. The doctrine of the divinity of the Saviour is interwoven with all that the word of God teaches concerning his incarnation, his atoning sufferings and death, his resurrection and exaltation, his mediatorial reign, and his coming to judge the world. The appropriate connection between the priestly and kingly offices of Christ is strikingly exhibited in the sixth chapter of Zechariah. Joshua, the high-priest, (type of our great High-priest,) was placed in the presence of the people, and crowns of silver and gold were placed on his head. The declaration was then made, "*Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold the MAN whose name is the BRANCH, and he shall grow up out of his place, and HE shall build the temple of the Lord; even HE shall build the temple of the Lord; and HE shall bear the glory, and shall sit, and rule upon his throne, and HE shall be a priest*

upon his THRONE, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." This gives a delightful and instructive view of the mediatorial reign of the Redeemer, founded upon his finished work of redemption and the ministration of Providence in the direction of all events for the interests of his church. Of a similar character are the words of Paul, Phil. ii., "*Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*" The Redeemer, in the Book of Revelation, declares : "*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I am he that liveth and was dead, and am alive again, and have the keys of death, and hell.*" "*He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS.*" Concerning the kingdom over which the Saviour is exalted, the words in the Psalm xlv. are appropriate, "*Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, Oh, most mighty with thy glory, and thy majesty ; and in thy ma-*

jesty ride prosperously, because of truth and righteousness, and meekness, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies, whereby the people shall fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre." The great means by which the Lord Jesus forms, establishes, and extends his kingdom is the gospel as committed to, and ministered by, his church. This is "the wisdom and power of God unto salvation to all that believe." The truth of his holy word, connected with his instituted ordinances, the ministry of reconciliation, the Sabbath, the sacraments, is "THE ROD OF HIS STRENGTH," by which he subdues sinners to himself, rules even in the midst of his enemies, and exhibits to men and angels that He is King in Zion. These means are rendered effectual by the agency of the Holy Spirit. The peculiar promise referring to the Gospel Church, is that of the Holy Spirit, while the peculiar promise of the Old Testament Church was that of the Messiah to come. His office is "to convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment," to "lead into all truth," and to carry on his work of sanctification by the

needed supply of light, and strength, and comfort, sealing unto the day of redemption. Our King in Zion, in employing the gospel, and the instituted ordinances of the church, under the agency of the Spirit, uses, and wields, all the resources of the physical and moral world for the promotion and accomplishment of his designs. He is "*Head over all things for his church.*" All things and all occurrences under his control will subserve the interests of his kingdom. His sceptre is a righteous sceptre, and executes judgment on his foes. It is a sceptre of grace, and yet a sceptre of righteousness, for Christ is the *Lord our righteousness*, and in him "mercy and truth meet together;" "righteousness and peace kiss each other." And now to the soul bowing beneath the sceptre of his grace, "all things work together for good to him as loving God, and called according to his purpose." When our King in Zion shall, in the end of time and the fulness of the dispensations, come a second time without sin unto salvation, and judge the world, and seal the awards of justice and of grace, then shall be sung with one accord the "song of Moses and the Lamb, saying, Great and mar-

vellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints."

III. THE DIRECTION, AND ENCOURAGEMENT AFFORDED BY THE CONSIDERATION OF THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE AS COMMITTED TO THE REDEEMER, TO THE EXERCISE OF BELIEVING PRAYER.

It is only in contemplation of the all-ruling Providence of God, in all events, operating in all and by all, that a foundation is laid for trust and prayer, and it is only in view of the mediatorial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the fruit of his redeeming work, that a sinner can find his fears removed, and hope and comfort supplied. This encouragement is stated in the connected passage from which the last text is taken. Heb., iv. 14, 16. "*Seeing then we have a great High-priest, who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a High-priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*" How sweetly attractive, how highly encouraging, how richly consoling are these words at all

times, and in all circumstances, to the child of God :—

“ Where high the Heavenly temple stands,
The House of God not made with hands,
A great High-priest our nature wears,
Our Friend and Advocate appears.

Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a Brother's eye—
Partaker of the human name,
He knows the frailty of our frame.

In every pang that rends the heart,
The man of sorrows had a part ;
He sympathizes with our grief,
And to the sufferer sends relief.

With boldness therefore, at the throne,
Let us make all our sorrows known,
And ask the aid of heavenly power
To help us in the evil hour.”

In the relation existing between God, the Creator and Preserver, and man, gifted with intelligence and moral responsibility, prayer is a primary duty pressing upon the conscience and heart. It implies an habitual sense of dependence upon him, a recognition of his agency in all the events of life with thankfulness and submission, and a devotion of heart and life under the control of law to his service. What to man in his first state of integrity was engraved upon his

soul—the spirit of prayer—is now to the sinner, fallen by his iniquity and alienated from the life of God, an inestimable privilege secured by the atonement and intercession of the Saviour. “By *him* we have access by one spirit unto the Father.” “Having a High-priest over the House of God, let us draw near in the assurance of faith,” &c. The depravity of the heart leads away from God and opposes his holiness and grace, and God is not in all his thoughts. But as soon as the sinner returns to God, and the spiritual life is quickened within him, “behold, he prayeth;” and prayer becomes a vital element of his new nature in continued exercise and culture. The aversion of man to the duty of prayer and the objections we find raised against it are among the plainest indications of that carnal mind which is enmity against God. It is said that God has a fixed purpose and determined order as to all events, and how can we suppose that our prayers can affect his purpose and determined order. But let it never be forgotten that he ever connects the means with the end, and in his moral government, prayer with the associated exercises, and duties with the fulfilment of his gracious designs. It is in connec-

tion with the laws which govern and establish the order, both of the physical and natural world, that he accomplishes his purposes. In believing that prayer has a direct influence in obtaining the blessings which we seek, there is nothing more inconsistent with reason than in believing the influence of any second cause in producing its appropriate effect. The second cause, although it may consist in the voluntary choice of a free agent, is as much the subject of a purpose as the proper and necessary effect to be produced. What the Scriptures teach in reference to the influence of prayer in obtaining that which it seeks from God, is not more difficult to be understood than that ploughing and sowing should have a direct, and indispensable influence in the production of a harvest. In both cases the divine purpose is equally certain, and in both cases the means, and second causes are the same. It is also remarked that God in his infinite goodness is disposed to supply the wants of his creatures, and in his infinite wisdom he discerns, and is acquainted with all these wants, and that, therefore, prayer is unnecessary, and seems to call in question these attributes. On the contrary, the right view of them enforces

the duty of prayer, and furnishes the incentive, and encouragement to its exercise. While God is infinitely good, and wise, he yet requires us to make known to him our requests, both that we may duly honor him in a right state of heart in the recognition of all his claims and of our relation to him, but also that thereby our true benefit and best interests may be promoted. By asking from him the supply of our wants, we cherish and increase our dependence upon him, and of our obligations to him, and feel that we are accountable to him for all his gifts.

Viewing prayer as our incumbent duty as creatures, in the neglect of which our depravity is manifested, and our guilt aggravated, we now are led to regard it as a most undeserved, and graciously bestowed privilege. We may well ask, "*Will God in very deed dwell with man?*" It is even so. For "the only begotten Son of God tabernacled among us full of grace and truth," and now, "out of his fulness, do we receive grace for grace." "God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." As Christ has consecrated "a new and living way through the veil, that is his flesh," we now have "boldness to enter into the holiest

by the blood of Jesus." As our great High-priest has entered into the heavens as our forerunner and intercessor, we are exhorted, and privileged to "come boldly to the throne of grace." The very term, the **THRONE OF GRACE**, bears instruction to the mind, and imparts sweet consolation to the soul seeking salvation. When we speak of the *throne of God* in its absolute sense, we regard him in his essential sovereignty of glory, dominion, and power, exercising all his perfection in the government of all his works. This view, though it may bow the soul in reverence and fear, can attract no confidence, and can inspire no hope, but rather repels under a sense of guilt and sin, and excites terror. But now it is a *throne of grace*, and the eye of faith directed to the cross and the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, and then directed to the throne of glory on which he is exalted to reign, crowned **LORD OF ALL**, ministers peace in believing, and inspires the hope that enters within the veil, both sure and steadfast.

"'Tis by the merits of thy death,
The Father smiles again ;
'Tis by thy interceding breath,
The Spirit dwells with men."

It is supposed there is an allusion in the phrase, "*the throne of grace*," to the mercy-seat in the temple. The mercy-seat was the golden cover of the ark, over which the cherubim spread their wings, and between whom the Lord was said to sit as on a throne. On the great day of atonement the High-priest entered within the holiest, and sprinkled the blood of atonement on the mercy-seat, and went and blessed the congregation of the people. This was a striking type of the character, work, and blessings of the great High-priest of our profession.

In coming to the throne of grace we are exhorted to come with *boldness*. This boldness implies *firm filial confidence*, *enlarged desires*, and *humble expectation*. It is wholly opposed to irreverence and presumption. The deepest reverence and self-prostration become the creature, how much more the fallen sinner. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all them who are round about him." The boldness cherished must always be in connection, not only with godly fear, but with humble penitence, and deep contrition, with the feelings like those which Isaiah cherished when he saw the Lord on his throne,

and contemplated the worship of the heavenly host. Then he exclaimed, "Wo is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of an unclean people, for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of Glory." Then the angel, (even the angel of the covenant,) took a coal from the altar, and laid it upon his mouth, and said: "Lo, this has touched thy lips, thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us. Then I said, Here am I, send me." This happily delineates the proper spirit in which the throne of grace must be approached, and the blessing which awaits the penitent supplicant in the faith of the Redeemer. Let the spirit which pervades the prayers which occur in the Psalms and in other parts of the word of God be marked and imitated. This boldness implies an enlargement of desire, a freedom of soul in the outpouring of our requests, intercessions, and thanksgivings. It is opposed to that slavish fear which brings bondage, that paralyzing, gloomy apprehension which straitens, dejects, and afflicts the soul. It arises from the working of distrust and unbelief. Paul

says, Romans, viii., "*Ye have not received the spirit of bondage unto fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*" Under the influence of this spirit of adoption, "*it bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, and, if children, then heirs, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.*" This filial boldness and confidence supposes a discriminating acquaintance with divine truth, a careful application of it in the trial of our hearts and lives, an unwavering resting upon the promises given us in Christ Jesus, all presented by faith in his name. We should realize that "we are no more strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God." We are to come to the mercy-seat "that we may obtain *mercy, and find grace.* These terms, "*mercy and grace,*" are comprehensive, and cover the whole field of our wants and necessities, and the blessings needed for our relief and supply. *Mercy* refers to the sinner under condemnation, and alienated from God, and brings to him pardon, reconciliation, and salvation. *Mercy* is mentioned first, because, till it is attained, we have no reason to hope for any other spiritual gift. Pardon and justification are

introductory to all the other blessings of the gospel. We must go through Christ as a Saviour before we receive him as a comforter and friend. *Grace* refers to all the supplies needed in our spiritual life, accommodated to all the outward circumstances and vicissitudes in which believers may be placed, and all the inward conflicts and outward temptations they may be called to suffer. They need grace to enlighten, instruct, and guide ; grace to discipline, purify, and quicken their inward spirits ; grace to strengthen and uphold in the discharge of all duty amidst all opposition ; grace to cheer and comfort the soul under the pressure of every sorrow ; grace to triumph over death and the grave, when it shall be fulfilled and crowned in glory. While we are ever dependent on and in need of divine mercy and grace, peculiar seasons and modes of trial will call for special corresponding exercises. While we treasure up the memory of the past for the profitable improvement of it, our anxiety should only be to obtain grace to discharge the duties, and meet the events of the present day calmly, leaving the future in the hands of a faithful covenant God. Abiding by the mercy-seat, and walking in the

communion and service of the Saviour, the believer need not fear the evils of the future. The grace that is found sufficient for the present will not fail in any condition hereafter. The promise will be verified, "*I have called thee by thy name. Thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*" The grace that enables us to live to Jesus will surely bless us, and enable us to triumph in death.

The finished work of redemption, and the mediatorial reign and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, are the objects on which the faith of the believer rests, and from which he derives motives and encouragements to prayer. But one part of the priestly office of the Redeemer is specially exhibited in reference to the privilege and exercise of prayer, that of intercession, founded upon his sacrificial work. Having entered into the holiest, he there lives to make intercession for his people, "able to save unto the uttermost all those who come unto God by him." The intercessory prayer in the seven-

teenth chapter of John commends the matter of it to our faith, as well as the intercessor. As under the Old Testament typical economy, the High-priest appeared before God at the mercy-seat with the breast-plate, on which were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, so our Redeemer bears on his heart all the interests of his people, making intercession for them. Their feeble and imperfect services, cleansed in his blood, are presented to the Father, accepted as a sweet smelling savor. In the eighth chapter of the Revelations we read, *“another angel came, and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.”*

“Look up my soul with cheerful eye,
See where the great Redeemer stands;
The glorious Advocate on high,
With precious incense in his hands.”

True prayer, while offered in the name and in reliance on the merits of Christ, is of the operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul. He is ever the great agent in the renewal and sanctification of the soul, and in dependence upon his grace and

promised influence our prayers must be offered. He was promised, as the Spirit of grace and *supplication*, to be poured forth upon the House of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. While Christ is our advocate (Paraclete) before the throne, the Holy Spirit is our advocate (Paraclete) or comforter within us. Hence it is said that "the Spirit itself makes intercession for us, even with groanings which cannot be uttered." Hence we read of "praying in the Holy Ghost." "Praying always with all prayer, and supplication in the Spirit." It is the office of the Spirit, in connection with the use of all appropriate means, to "teach us all things," to lead into all truth, to seal "unto the day of redemption." Let the connected offices of the Redeemer and of the Holy Spirit ever be kept in view, and a happy influence will arise to guide and enlarge our desires and petitions, and to place our enlightened faith on the promises, assured that "*He that has promised is faithful,*" and is the hearer of prayer. We should always seek that our prayers should be according to the will of God. In respect to what is earthly and temporal, while allowed to spread our case before God in prayer, it must be with submission

to the disposal of his own wisdom and covenant faithfulness. When in these cases he denies, it is to do us good ; in the very way of earthly losses, disappointments, and sorrow to bear to us spiritual blessings. Paul, under the pressure of the thorn in the flesh, besought the Lord thrice (earnestly and anxiously) that the thorn might be removed, and yet the thorn remained. Still the prayer was answered, if not in kind, still in greater kindness, and in true blessing. Then the Lord brought and sealed the promise to him : " My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is perfected in weakness." Then Paul exclaimed : " Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." When we ask for spiritual blessings for ourselves we should cast ourselves without wavering upon the promises, and lay hold upon his strength pledged therein. James says : " Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." The temper of mind here alluded to does not apply to those conflicts of

spirit which are incident to the people of God, while they firmly and fully rest with an approving judgment and ardent desires on the truths and interests directing their prayers. But it does apply to that indecision in a fluctuating state of judgment and affection between the world and Christ. The prayer of faith respects the firm convictions of the judgment and the entire interest of the heart in the great truths and subjects carried to the throne of grace, and an undoubting reliance on God as the hearer of prayer. Not doubting that in the midst of passing delay, in the trial of faith, He will in due time show that "praying breath was never spent in vain."

Prayer in its more direct and limited meaning is supplication presenting our wants and seeking their relief. Still it necessarily includes in the spirit and exercise of it *adoration, and filial reverence, contrition, and confession of sin, grateful acknowledgment of God's mercies, intercession for other persons and interests, and praise* to the hearer and inspirer of prayer. These several exercises, however, in their specific character differing from each other, ever blend together, and mutually promote and strengthen each other.

The duty of prayer in the family and social circles, and in the church, will be highly prized and carefully observed by every Christian; but it has its seat and its culture in the *heart*, and there is the preparation for an earnest and profitable attendance on, and engagedness in, public and social prayer. Our Saviour's injunction is strongly expressive: "*When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*" Here the Christian, retired from the world, unobstructed by its cares and associations, calmly searching his heart and reviewing his ways, contemplating the dealings of God with him, and meditating on divine truth, pours out his soul before him in the fullest and freest manner. The example of the Saviour, who, in the active prosecution of his labors, frequently retired to the privacy of wrestling prayer, enforces the duty and enhances the privilege. The degree of a believer's sanctification may generally be measured by the frequency and fervor of his secret prayers, and the delight which he finds in his retirement in pouring out his soul before the throne of grace. Prayer forms the pulsations of

the spiritual life, which mark either the health and vigor or the feebleness and decay of it.

In prayer we should "acknowledge God in all our ways," in the seasons of health and sickness, of prosperity and adversity, of joy and sorrow. But how soon and how strongly do the fondness of a creature's love and an onward tide of worldly prosperity and enjoyment lead the soul away from God and invade like a moth the spirit of prayer. It is in the season of affliction that God draws us thereby away from our wordly idols, breaks the snares by which we are held captive, and by his *rod* brings us under the bond of the covenant. James says, "*Is any afflicted, let him pray.*" When we are bereft of earthly enjoyments, when suffering under sickness, sorrow, or reproach, when watching the last agonies of our friends, or weeping over their graves, what a blessed refuge is the mercy-seat.

Following these few thoughts on the important topics presented by our subject, we offer some closing remarks.

1. The consideration of the Providence of God laying a foundation for the exercise of prayer should lead us habitually to realize the government of God, and his agency in all the

events of life. We are prone to rest in second causes and lose sight of the great First Cause. The means used for the attainment of designed ends are of his appointment and subject to his control in their issues. Amid all the vicissitudes of life, under the clouds and darkness that envelop the works of his hands, and in all the scenes of perplexity which attend us individually, and in all our domestic, social, and civil relations, how does belief and trust in the character and government of God compose and enlighten the mind, and comfort and sustain the heart. "THE LORD REIGNETH, *let the earth rejoice.*" As we read the whole course of the Psalms, as well as other parts of the sacred Scriptures, in strains sublime and impressive, enforcing and illustrating the government of God in his all-ruling and universal Providence, how is faith called into exercise and the heart opened and refreshed. "*Whoso is wise and observeth these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.*" How difficult and yet how most needful is it to keep the eye fixed upon *God reigning* on his throne, founded on justice and judgment, while mercy and truth, which came by Jesus Christ wait before him.

2. Faith in the Providence of God, and in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, will stay the soul in those circumstances most clothed in mystery, and most adverse, bereaving and apparently desolating in their nature and influence. *"Clouds and darkness are round about him. Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."* David, in the seventy-third Psalm, says, that his *"feet were almost gone, his steps had well nigh slipped,"* when he saw the prosperity of the wicked in contrast with the severe afflictions of the righteous. In the very nature of the case, viewing the limited intellect of man now darkened by sin, and the workings of Providence in all the variety and combinations of its movements, mystery in the interpretation must occur. *"His way is in the sea, and his path in the deep waters."*

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps on the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill
He treasures up his bright designs
And works his sovereign will."

We are ready to ask, Why does the Most High allow iniquity to prosper, and the adversaries of his truth and cause to prevail while his people and his church languish and suffer? Why does he consign to an early grave the lovely child that promised so much usefulness, or cut off, in the very meridian of life, him who was so active and useful in society and the church, while the profane and vicious are prospered and spared even to old age? In these and numerous other instances we must exclaim with the prophet, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour." Here faith, amid the darkness and sorrows that enter our lot, recognizes God as the Saviour of Israel, and inspires submission and hope. Could we trace the designs and issues of our earthly trials, we would live by sight not by faith. Here faith has its appropriate exercise, approving the justice and trusting the wisdom, love, and faithfulness of our covenant God. It acknowledges the declaration of the Saviour, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," and seeking grace for present duty either in active exertion or patient suffering, rests on the truth, "All things work together for good to

them who love God, who are the called according to his purpose." "Though he slay me I will trust in him."

3. A new view of affliction is furnished in the all-pervading Providence of God, and our privileged access to the mercy-seat. It is the fruit of sin, but by faith in Christ its sting is taken away, the curse removed, and it is rendered the discipline of divine wisdom and love, to attract us to Christ and lead us onward to heaven, mortifying sin, weaning us from earth, and placing our affections upon things above, where our life is hid with Christ in God. The contemplation of the glorious high throne of majesty, power, and holiness, could only prompt fear and despair, were it not that there is "a rainbow round it green as emerald." Amid the darkness and the storm faith looks up, and a beam from the Sun of righteousness descends upon the rain, and the beautiful bow of promise expands and covers the skies, the sign and pledge of SALVATION. By his rod the Redeemer brings us under the bond of the covenant. By it he stirs up our nest of wordly ease and repose, that we may spread the wings of faith and love upwards. In faithfulness he afflicts us.

Never is the light from heaven so bright and cheering as when it shines on the heaviest gloom of worldly darkness. Never are the consolations which are in Christ Jesus so sweet and supporting as when they are sought and enjoyed in the scenes of the sorest trials and most distressing sorrows. How happily does Paul show the process by which affliction is improved, and thus blessed to, us. *“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby.”* We in the school of Christ are to be “partakers of his sufferings.” *“If children then heirs, joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with him.”* In the book of Revelation, in answer to the question, “Who are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?” it is answered, “These are they which came out of much tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Then and there light will reflect upon all the past, we shall know as we are known, the intricacies of God’s providential dealings will all be unravelled, and there will be one acknowledgment in blended light and love, “HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL.”

4. Our faith should habitually be directed and fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ, once the *Lamb* of God on the cross, and now the crowned Lord of all on the throne—the “*priest on the throne.*” In running the race set before us, we are exhorted to “look unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” The individual believer thus looking to Jesus may, in all circumstances, in all straits, fears, and sorrows, say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.” He is *king in Zion*, exalted to be “head over all things for his church.” The administration of the kingdoms of nature and grace is committed to his hands as the reward of his “obedience unto death.” His blood-bought church is safe in his hands. When he ascended on high and gave his commission to the ministry to the end of time, it was founded on “All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth.” The heathen may rage and the people imagine vain things, but he who was set on the holy hill of Zion, as king, rules with his royal sceptre and rod, and to him shall be given

“the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.” Amid the commotions, revolutions, and warfares among the nations, faith calmly looks up to the throne of universal empire in which Jesus reigns, who directs, controls, and issues all for the accomplishment of his wise counsels and gracious designs in carrying on his work of redemption to its completion. HE overturns and overturns till HE comes whose right it is to reign in the triumphs of his grace through the whole earth, when the kingdoms of the world shall become “*the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.*”

The Trinity.

BY THE

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I X.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
Matt. xxviii. 19.

THIS text embraces three names, which the New Testament, especially, has made very familiar to us. Our work to-night is to inquire to whom these names belong. What are we to understand by "the Father?" and what by "the Son?" and what by "the Holy Ghost?"

The first question will not detain us even for a moment; for all readers of the Bible will admit that the Father is represented to be God, supreme and infinite.

What, then, is the Son? This question has been much debated, and we cannot answer it without a careful study of the Scripture testimony. That testimony, however, must be final. The man who withholds his faith from the evidence of the Bible, when it is fairly stated, places himself beyond the reach of this argument, and of every argument upon this subject.

The New Testament, then, presents to us the most remarkable person that ever appeared among men. In one aspect, indeed, he does not differ widely from other men. His body is subject to weariness and hunger, to suffering and death : his soul is exposed to sorrow and apprehension. In one remarkable instance at least,* he confesses that he does not know all things. He prays, and is answered. Angels minister to him ; and he seeks sympathy even from men. It is evident that he is really a man. He is a man, however, appointed to a special work, endowed with special grace, and attested by special signs. Is he anything more than this ? No unprejudiced reader of the Scriptures can doubt that he is.

It is the office of a delegate or servant to exalt his principal, or at most to exalt the work which he performs in his principal's name. But Christ everywhere *exalts himself* ; not eagerly nor boastfully, but with the majesty that becomes infinite greatness. "A greater than Solomon is here."† "I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the temple."‡ Let us remember how glorious and sacred the temple was in the regard of

* Mark xiii. 32.

† Matt. xii. 42.

‡ Matt. xii. 6.

the pious Jews, and of Christ himself, and that he spoke of the temple in its most sacred and glorious days, and this claim will appear most remarkable. But he adds, (v. 8,) "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day;" a day ordained of God and guarded by his most solemn sanctions. So, too, when the Pharisees complained of the hosannas of the multitude, he answered, "I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."* But most significant, perhaps, of all such assertions of his personal dignity, is the rebuke which he administered to the unbelief of his disciples: "Oh, faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?"† Make these the words of any creature charged with God's grace to sinful men, and they astonish us by their fretful arrogance and presumption. "How long shall *I* suffer you?" At most it should have been, "How long shall *God* suffer you?"

But this majestic self-assertion of Christ appears very distinctly in his working of *miracles*. Not that he claims them as the result of his separate power; upon the other hand, he is careful

* Luke xix. 40.

† Matt. xvii. 17.

to declare, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."* He could not say less than this, and yet claim to be the attested messenger of the Father. And yet, whenever the miracles are wrought, he speaks the word of power out of his own bosom, and shows himself the proprietor of his wonder-working goodness. He heals or feeds men because he "has compassion" on them, and by the assertion of his own sufficient choice. Not once in all his life does he make his miracle contingent upon expected help, or reject or limit the grateful worship which his beneficiaries offer to himself. The only seeming exception occurs before the raising of Lazarus, and then he does not pray, but gives thanks, and that for the sake, not of himself, but of others: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; and I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."† This is, as it professes to be, only an audible assertion of his divine commission. It acknowledges, indeed, just so much subordination and dependence as are inseparable from the idea of such commission. But the subsequent word, that brings the dead man from the

* John xiv. 10.

† John xi. 41, 42.

grave, asserts his own intrinsic majesty: "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth." (v. 43.)

This uniform manner of Christ stands in striking contrast with the manner of other divine messengers. Miracles are not wanting in the Old Testament history. But in almost every instance the expressions, either of the agent or of the narrator, formally exclude the idea of any power in the agent himself. Thus Moses was bidden to "stretch out his hand over the sea, and divide it."* But the narrative proceeds, (v. 21,) "And the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind." In most instances, however, the miracle follows an express prayer for divine intervention. The standing still of the sun and the moon,† the fire falling on Elijah's sacrifice,‡ the restoration of the child of the widow of Zarephath by the same prophet,§ and of that of the Shunammite by Elisha,|| are fair examples of the spirit and manner of those ancient men, and they find no counterpart in the history of Christ. On one occasion, indeed, Elijah seems to rise almost to the grandeur of

* Ex. xiv. 16.

† Josh. x. 12.

‡ 1 Kings xviii. 37.

§ 1 Kings xvii. 20.

|| 2 Kings iv. 33.

our Saviour's miracles; when going with Elisha toward the scene of his translation, he takes his mantle, and, wrapping it together, smites the waters of Jordan, and they are divided hither and thither.* Here is no appeal for heavenly help. Yet Elisha, when he returns to the same river, and smites it with the same mantle, calls out, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" (v. 14,) and so confesses the sole source of the miraculous power. But Christ, when his terrified disciples awakened him, "arose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"† That question remains unanswered to this day.

The same consciousness of personal majesty appears in our Saviour's *utterances*, whether of truth or grace. The old prophets always repeated their messages in the name of God, and the most solemn or instructive announcement owed all its meaning and authority to that weighty declaration, "Thus saith the Lord." But Christ, while never sinking his character as the messenger of the Father, perpetually asserts his own

* 2 Kings ii. 8.

† Matt. viii. 26, 27

sufficient wisdom and truth. The confirmation of his most important announcements is the simple declaration, "I say unto you," or "verily, verily, I say unto you." Upon this basis stand, and shall forever stand the fundamental and complete revelations of the Gospel concerning faith and duty and salvation, concerning time and judgment and eternity.

But we are most interested to notice *the place which he assigns to himself* in his offers of Gospel grace: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."* "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."† Of the same import are those most touching words which he uttered over Jerusalem: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not."‡

Some of his special promises, however, assert his power and greatness more distinctly. When he sent forth his twelve disciples "he gave them power and authority"—not authority only, which he might have been commissioned to transmit, but

* Matt. xi. 28.

† John xi. 24, 25.

‡ Luke xiii. 34.

“he gave them *power* and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.”* At another time, foreseeing the persecutions to which kings and rulers would subject them, he said, “Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.”† Three things come together in these remarkable verses: a foreknowledge of the persecutions which the apostles were to meet, the pledge of his personal wisdom to go with them everywhere and to furnish them for their defense, and the pledge of the result. And of the same import are those parting words which just preceded his ascension: “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”‡ And yet these promises to his apostles are no more remarkable than those which he has left for all Christians: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”§ “If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.”||

Since he sustains such relations to the labors and comfort and success of his followers, we are

* Luke ix. 1.

† Luke xxi. 14, 15.

‡ Matt. xxviii. 20.

§ Matt. xviii. 20.

|| John xiv. 14.

not surprised when he asserts a proprietorship and supremacy over them and their work, and its results. He speaks of *his* kingdom;* of the wheat to be gathered into *his* barn;† of *his* angels; (v.41;) and of the throne of *his* glory. (ch.xxv.31.)

And there is no prerogative of such supremacy which he does not claim for himself. He is the object of *faith*: “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.”‡ “Without me ye can do nothing.”§ “Because I live, ye shall live also.”|| *Service* is to be rendered to him: “Keep my commandments.”¶ “If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”** “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”†† Perpetual *affection* and *honor* are to be given to him: “This do in remembrance of me.”‡‡ “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.”§§ This last expression, if taken at anything like its literal import, suggests an idea of infinite claims and infinite dignity. And it does not stand alone. A class of sayings entirely peculiar to our Redeemer shed their light upon it: “The

* John xviii. 36. † Matt. xiii. 30. ‡ John xiv. 1. § John xv. 5.
 ¶ John xiv. 19. ¶ John xiv. 15. ** John xii. 26. †† Matt. xxv. 40.
 ‡‡ Luke xxii. 19. §§ John v. 23.

only-begotten Son, which *is in the bosom* of the Father, he hath declared him.”* “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which *is in heaven*.”† “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”‡ a saying for which the Jews sought to kill him, as they did for its more striking counterpart: “I and my Father are one.”§

I know that the force of this last declaration is thought by some to be greatly weakened by our Saviour’s application of a similar expression to the relation which subsists between the Father and all believers: “As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.”|| Hence it is argued that Christ is one with the Father in the same sense in which all Christians are one with God. But the argument proves too much: for in the same prayer upon which it is based, our Saviour makes other comparisons as exact as this one: “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” (v. 18.) “Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” (v. 23.) “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them.” (v.

* John i. 18.

† John iii. 13.

‡ John v. 17,

§ John x. 30.

|| John xvii. 21.

22.) This last declaration is the more noticeable from its intimate relation to the passage we are now considering; for the verse proceeds, "that they may be one, even as we are one." Now is it true, or is it here represented as true, that the disciples of Christ are fairly his equals in their mission, in their glory, and in their place in the love of the Father? Press the words, and they surely say this. Do they mean it? Then we have no Lord. Whatever the past Christ may have been, the future Christ is only our fellow. And yet in this very prayer he speaks of his own distinctive glory, and prays that we may be permitted to behold it. (v. 24.) And we know that before him are to be gathered all nations, and that the throne of judgment is "the throne of his glory." It is plain that these comparisons are to be understood in a sense adapted to the different relations of the parties they concern. The mission, and the love, and the glory, with its resulting union *are the same* in a solid and most precious sense—the same so far as they can be the same. And, in another sense, just as large as the pre-eminence of the Redeemer above the redeemed, they cannot be the same. No unprejudiced reader of Christ's declaration, "I and my Father

are one," would think of making those words an expression of common piety, and so of adopting them in his own devotions. If he would, let him go on and appropriate those other words of Christ, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*"*

It appears, then, from all these acts and sayings of our Saviour, that he claimed a dignity and perfection, a pre-eminence over men, and a relationship to the Father, that cannot be reconciled with any notion of his mere humanity.

It is true, he nowhere formally asserted that he was God. We are to remember, however, that the distinct work of Christ was to "declare the Father." That work he fully performed. But himself he did not need to declare. His visible life declared him. Let us go on, therefore, to a second stage of our argument, and consider what impression our Saviour made upon those who knew his life and character.

Thomas, first of all, so soon as he was convinced of his Master's actual resurrection, called him, in distinct terms, "My Lord and my God!"† The attempt which is often made to convert this

* John xiv. 23.

† John xx. 28.

exclamation into a profane expression of surprise is frustrated, not only by the intrinsic harshness and unseemliness of such an interpretation, but by the terms of the narrative; for Thomas said, not "in reference to him," nor "at the view of him," but "*to him*, My Lord and my God." Peter, speaking to the Jews, called him "The Prince of life;"* and to Cornelius he said of him, "He is Lord of all."† Paul, writing to the Corinthians, called him "The Lord of glory."‡ Writing to the Hebrews, with the express design of establishing his Godhead, he applied to him the words of the Psalmist, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever;"§ and, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands."|| Passing by those passages of similar import, the reading of which is, however unjustly, disputed, we quote, as unequivocal and decisive, the words of Paul to the Romans, (chap. ix. 5,) "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." The most plausible method of evading this distinct testimony is to break the passage into two parts, so that the

* Acts iii. 15.

† Acts x. 36.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 8.

§ Heb. i. 8.

|| Heb. i. 10.

statement concerning Christ shall end with the words "who is over all," and the rest of the verse shall become a doxology—"God be blessed forever." The frequent occurrence of doxologies in Paul's writings would greatly encourage this interpretation, if it were not for the twofold fact, that the grammatical form of such doxologies is perfectly settled, and that the different form of this text makes it impossible that it should be one. Our translators have given the only natural sense of the Greek; and no scholar would think of seeking another sense if he did not wish to evade the argument which the text contains.

But the fact that the apostles called our Redeemer by divine names, although incontestable and very important, constitutes but a very small part of the proof which they have left us of his true divinity.

The religious recognition of God is, in a large degree, a matter of feeling. Theological science aims to define God's attributes; but a pious soul most naturally thinks of him as the object of its supreme love and trust and service. These make up divine homage. The being who is entitled to receive them must be God: for while it is easy to see why God may appoint other beings

to do his work, it is not conceivable that he should appoint any other to receive religious duty. That belongs to himself; and no mere mystery within the Godhead could be so bewildering to our reason, as would be the dogma that God has set forth a being, who is not God, to be the object of our religious trust and worship. Even if the unnatural tribute could seem to be demanded, every instinct of piety would revolt from rendering it.

What was Christ, then, in the estimate of apostolic piety? No adequate answer of this question can be given to any man who is not thoroughly familiar with the spirit of The Acts and the epistles. And any one who has a sympathetic acquaintance with those books knows that they deny to Christ no element of supreme religious affection.

The apostles regarded Christ with absolute *faith*. When Peter offered to heal the lame man at the gate of the temple, he said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."* The follower of Elijah repeated his miracle in the name of "the Lord God of Elijah." The followers of Jesus repeated his miracles in

* Acts iii. 6.

the name of Jesus. "Æneas," said Peter, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; and he arose immediately."* Where was Jesus Christ, that he should work that cure at Lydda?

They had an equal trust in his ordinary providence. Paul owed his courage to the promise of Jesus—"I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee."† "I trust in the Lord Jesus," said the same apostle, "to send Timotheus unto you;" and then, a few verses lower, "I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."‡ A striking expression occurs in 1 Thess. iii. 11, "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you." Here we have both prayer and faith, addressed equally, in the same single utterance, to Christ and to the Father. Let any other name replace that of Christ in this sentence, and it will be converted at once from prayer into blasphemy.

But what is most remarkable of all is, the apostles' reliance upon Christ as the author of spiritual blessings. Where proof is so abundant it is not easy to select it. But notice, first of

* Acts ix. 34. † Acts xxvi. 16, 17. ‡ Phil. ii. 19, 24.

all, the salutations given at the beginning of the epistles : "Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."* Thirteen of the fourteen epistles which bear Paul's name begin with this significant prayer ; and in no instance is the name of Christ omitted from it. It is never "Grace and peace from God our Father," nor "Grace and peace from God our Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ." But the names stand together ; the Father and Christ are entreated as the equal bestowers of the divine benefits. In the benedictions which close the epistles there is more variety of form : to the Colossians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to the Hebrews, Paul says simply, "Grace be unto you." Does any man doubt that he means divine grace ? But to the Romans, the Corinthians, (in the first epistle,) the Galatians, the Philippians, the Thessalonians, and Philemon, he writes, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Surely, this is divine grace too ; and yet the name of the Father is not connected with it in either of these seven benedictions ; nay, the epistle to the Romans concludes with two benedictions, and the Father is not mentioned in either. In the

* Rom. i. 7.

twentieth verse it is said, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," and in the twenty-fourth, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Yet there is one remarkable departure from this ordinary formula. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians concludes with that most complete and significant benediction, with which our ears and hearts are so familiar : "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." Now no man, whatever he may think about the *personality* of the Holy Ghost, will deny that that expression, "the fellowship of the Holy Ghost," describes communion with God himself. "The love of God," too, is surely a divine blessing. What, then, is that "grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," which begins this benediction? Is it something less divine and precious than the love and the fellowship with which it is here connected? How strange, then, that the apostle should combine such unequal elements in so solemn an utterance. How strange, too, that the one weaker element of this unequal benediction should make up the whole material of nearly every other. But it has

no weaker element. The grace of Christ was as much to Paul as the love of God.

Notice how he elsewhere speaks and thinks of it. "For this thing, (the thorn in the flesh,) I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength (*δύναμις*) is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power (*δύναμις*) of Christ may rest upon me."* Elsewhere he says, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."† All gospel blessings are represented as "the unsearchable riches of Christ."‡ The perfection of a Christian life is to "walk in him; rooted and built up in him."§ When Paul sought to awaken men who were dead in sin, it was in the faith that "Christ would give them light."|| If he hoped securely for his own salvation, it was because nothing "could separate him from the love of Christ."¶ If he pledged the safety of the pious dead, it was by the fact that they "slept in Jesus.** These expressions of Paul are in perfect sympathy with

* 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

† Phil. iv. 13.

‡ Eph. iii. 8.

§ Col. ii. 6, 7.

|| Eph. v. 14.

¶ Rom. viii. 35.

** 1 Thess. iv. 14.

the distinct, though less frequent, expressions of the other apostles. "In whom believing," says Peter, "ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."* The hope of heaven is described by John as a hope "in him,"† that is, Christ. And Jude encourages the pious to "look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life." (v. 21.) What shall we say of a being in whose "direction," and "grace," and "mercy," holy men trust for providential favors, for spiritual strength and comfort, and for life eternal?

But let us observe more particularly that this object of apostolic faith was not a mere agent of good, trusted at a distance, but a living and pervading presence. "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit," said Paul to Timothy.‡ "Our fellowship," said John, "is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." And again, "Ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father."§ Accordingly pious affections and acts were traced immediately to the agency of Christ. Paul "spoke in Christ."¶ Converts were "his work in the Lord."¶ He was "persuaded by the Lord Jesus."** Saints "walked in Christ

* 1 Pet. i. 8. † 1 John iii. 3. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 22. § 1 John i. 3; ii. 24.
 ¶ 2 Cor. xii. 19. ¶¶ 1 Cor. ix. 1. ** Rom. xiv. 14.

Jesus the Lord;”* and by him were “confirmed unto the end.”† If Paul had meant to represent Christ’s presence with his people to be constant and vital, like that of God, what clearer and stronger terms could he have used? Unless, indeed, they might be such as these: “Christ is our life;”‡ “Christ liveth in me.”§

Consider, then, what divine homage the apostles paid to this ever-present Saviour.

First, in service. Once Paul calls himself the “servant of God;”|| and the import of the language cannot be mistaken. But many times he calls himself “the servant of Christ;” and James includes both expressions in a single sentence: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” (ch. i. 1.) The expressions are striking; but we do not need to insist upon them, for other passages that are unequivocal define their meaning: “He gave himself for it, [the church,] that he might present it to *himself* a glorious Church.”¶ “Who gave himself for us, that he might purify *unto himself* a peculiar people.”** It followed of course, in Paul’s mind, that the pious were to

* Col. ii. 6.

§ Gal. ii. 20.

** Tit. ii. 4.

† 1 Cor. i. 8.

|| Tit. i. 1.

‡ Col. iii. 4.

¶ Eph. v. 25. 27.

“live unto him which died for them.”* “Whether we live,” said the same apostle, “we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord;”† the context deciding that the reference is to the Lord Jesus. “Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.”‡ “As always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ.”§ Does anything appear more plainly from the New Testament, than that the Apostle Paul made an absolute and final religious consecration of himself to the Lord Jesus Christ? Could any thought of God be more effectual in stimulating a holy life, than the thought of Christ was in stimulating his? Nor did he expect it to be less efficacious with others: “I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”|| “We exhort you by the Lord Jesus.”¶ “We command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

But these expressions of supreme religious affection are, for the most part, made *concerning*

* 2 Cor. v. 15.

† Rom. xiv. 8.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 9.

§ Phil. i. 20, 21.

|| 1 Cor. i. 10.

¶ 1 Thess. iv. 1.

** 2 Thess. iii, 6.

Christ. Did the apostles ever go further, and address similar expressions directly to him? It would greatly weaken our argument if they did not. It will establish it, if they did. Let us quote again, then, those well-known words of Paul: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice."* That "the Lord" was "the Lord Jesus," is put beyond question by the context. So in the selection of a new apostle, the eleven prayed, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen;"† where not only the scope of the prayer, but the title "Lord," according to the usage‡ of The Acts, points clearly to Christ. The ascription of divine knowledge which the prayer includes, is the exact counterpart of expressions elsewhere applied to the Redeemer.§

There are some other instances of direct address to the Saviour after his ascension, upon which I will not insist, since they are connected

* 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

† Acts i. 24.

‡ The word "Lord," as a title of address, (*Kύριε*), occurs in "The Acts" fifteen times. It commonly refers to Christ, though sometimes it is addressed to inferior persons; but only once does it clearly refer to the Father; and then by the *attraction* of a quotation from the Old Testament, in which "the Lord" (*ὁ Κύριος*) translates the name of Jehovah. (Acts iv. 26, 29.)

§ John ii. 25; xvi. 30; xxi. 17.

with his supernatural appearance in visions, in which case direct address may fall short of worship. But this consideration does not exclude the prayer of the dying Stephen, who saw a vision, not of Christ approaching him, but of "the heavens opened, of the glory of God, and of the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Words spoken in the light of that sublime disclosure were words of prayer and worship. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"* Let me say that the word "God," which our translators have introduced into this passage, so far as it may indicate two acts of prayer on the part of Stephen, has no place there, and perverts the sense of the original. The "calling upon" and the "saying" made up but one act of worship, of which Christ was the object. To Christ also, according to every natural principle of interpretation, was addressed that final most touching petition: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." (v. 60.) "I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord," said Paul to Timothy.† And, in a text already quoted in part, he prayed, "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ,

* Acts vii. 59.

† 1 Tim. i. 12.

direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love toward one another, * * to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”* Compare with this, the same apostle’s prayers for Onesiphorus, and for the Thessalonians: “The Lord give give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.”† “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, * * comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.”‡ Quotations like these establish the fact that the apostles and the early disciples worshipped Christ with thanksgiving and prayer. But more direct and sweeping evidence remains: “These things,” says St. John, “have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him, *that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and*

* 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.

† 2 Tim. i. 16, 18.

‡ 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.

if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."* After words like these, shall any one doubt whether the apostles taught men to pray to Christ? Indeed, this was the very description of a Christian, that he thus prayed. Ananias, speaking to Christ concerning the persecutions of Saul, said, "he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.† And Paul, in saluting the Corinthian Christians, includes with them "all that in every place call upon‡ the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."§ A single expression in The Acts deserves to be compared with these clear representations. We are told that Paul and Barnabas, as they passed from city to city, confirming the hearts of the disciples, "commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." How clearly did these prayers to Christ recognize his omnipresence and his power! The

* 1 John v. 13, 14, 15.

† Acts ix. 14.

‡ An attempt is made to change the translation of this expression, so that Christians shall be described in these passages as *called by* the name of Christ, and not as *calling on* his name. But the proposed alteration is condemned by the decisive and abundant usage both of the Old Testament and the New, and merits no consideration.

§ 1 Cor. i. 2.

apostles departed, but his presence and grace remained. Let us conceive of him as he thus came to be invoked and trusted at Jerusalem and at Antioch, at Lystra, and Corinth, and Rome. Why should not each one of that growing multitude of believers add to his daily petitions that exclamation of Peter, "To him be glory, both now and for ever!"* And what should all this direct offering of prayer and praise be, but worship rendered by the universal church to Christ?

It will help to complete our estimate of the religious affection in which the New Testament Christians held the Redeemer, if we look at him, for a moment, in the light of their hopes. Men always hope for the best things. There is nothing better than heaven; and it is easy to see how heaven defined itself in the hearts of the apostles. It was to "be with Christ;"† "to be present with the Lord;"‡ "to be ever with the Lord."§ And so in all the faith, and duty, and worship directed to Christ, they still kept "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of their great God and Saviour|| Jesus Christ."¶ He was to

* 2 Pet. iii. 18. † Phil. i. 23. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 8. § 1 Thess. iv. 17.

| The Greek, τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, means nothing less than this.

¶ Titus ii. 13.

“change their vile body.”* They were to “see him,” and “be like him;”† and to enter with him “into his everlasting kingdom.”‡ And all this ecstatic expectation Jude called “looking for the *mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*” (v. 21.)

Would that we could follow those holy men into the kingdom and glory for which they longed, and see the Saviour for whom they waited, and witness the homage which they pay him. The privilege is not denied us. That wonderful prophecy which concludes the New Testament, however difficult of interpretation in some of its parts, is clear as a sunbeam in its testimony concerning Christ. After its sublime description of the throne of God, (chap. iv.,) it represents our Redeemer as “a Lamb standing in the midst of the throne.”§ Afterwards it designates him by that exalted position: “The Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall lead them;”|| and the throne itself is twice described as the “throne of God and of the Lamb.”¶ In illustration of these expressions we have, at the close of the third chapter, the express words of Christ him-

* Phil. iii. 21.

§ Rev. v. 6.

† 1 John iii. 2.

| Rev. vii. 17.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 11.

¶ Rev. xxii. 1, 3.

self: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father upon his throne." We are not startled, then, when we read, concerning the New Jerusalem, such a declaration as this: "I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb *are the temple of it*. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."* One fuller view of this most excellent glory is granted to us. It includes the heavenly worshippers and the object of their worship: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon

* Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever." (Ch. v. 11-14. See also ch. vii. 9, 10.)

To this sublime conclusion grows the evidence of the New Testament concerning Christ. We judge of him by his own words and acts, by the testimony of his first disciples, by the worship of the discovered multitudes of heaven; and "blessing, and honor, and glory, and power" belong unto him, as they do unto God, "for ever and ever."

Now could that veil which hides the *past* eternity be drawn aside even for a moment, and could we recognize our Redeemer within that original glory, the briefest glimpse might clear up every doubt, and establish him upon an eternal throne. We have that glimpse, and more; we have full, clear vision. To this the Revelation itself in a great degree assists us; for it presents the Redeemer as the object not only of that heavenly worship which we have just considered, but of his own direct and striking statements concerning himself. These majestic forms of self-announcement find no parallel

short of those weighty words of Jehovah, which the ancient prophets so often recorded: "I am the Lord, that is my name." "I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King."* With similar grandeur Christ proclaimed, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."† But the resemblance is more than formal—it is substantial. Witness these announcements in Isaiah, "I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God."‡ "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called: I am he: I am the first, I also am the last."§ There is no just rule of interpretation that restricts these words to a narrower meaning in the Revelation than they have in Isaiah. They open to us then the past eternity, and assign to our Redeemer an existence without beginning, as it is without end.

Another of these characteristic declarations, however, is, if possible, more explicit still. The form in which our version presents it is very beautiful, and is justly endeared to us; but neither that translation nor any other can reproduce the idiomatic strength of the original. "I

* Isa. xlii. 8; xliii. 15.

† Rev. xxii. 13.

‡ Isa. xliv. 6.

§ Isa. xlviii. 12.

am the first and the last, and the living one ; [ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, καὶ ὁ ζῶν] and I became dead, [ἐγενόμην νεκρὸς,] and, behold, I live for ever and ever." [ζῶν ἔμμε εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.]* No words can more clearly define an eternal and absolute existence. The very incident of death is made to set off, by contrast, the underived and infinite life within which it was included.

But the two passages now quoted are only the echo of that unequivocal announcement which begins the book, (vs. 8 :) "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." These surely are the words of God. A part of them are elsewhere definitely applied to the Father; and for this reason, indeed, many commentators have decided that they cannot in this instance have been adopted by the Son. Upon the other hand, we claim that the context, and the scope and usage of the book shall decide which is the speaker; and that when that decision is made, his words are his own, however they may exalt him. Any other method of interpretation begs the

* Ch. i. 17, 18. Compare John vi. 57. "The living Father," ὁ ζῶν Πατήρ; and Rev. x. 6. "And swore by him that liveth forever and ever," ἐν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

question, and shuts out Christ from his claims, because it is concluded beforehand that they are too great for him. Three things prove that these are the words of the Redeemer. First, the form of self-announcement in this book belongs, as we have seen, to him. There is not one clear instance of its employment by the Father. In addition to this, the discourse of St. John at this point concerns only the Redeemer. For what immediately follows is an account of the vision of Christ, and of his messages to the churches. What immediately precedes is the prediction of our Saviour's second and glorious appearing. "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." Standing between these two visions of Christ, and having his soul on fire with the glory of Christ, St. John hears and records the announcement, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord." Had the sentence stopped there, no interpreter would have thought of ascribing it to any but the Lord Jesus. The very title "Lord," would be thought to point to him, since only two verses below his name gives designation to "the Lord's day," and the title does not occur anywhere else

within the first three chapters. But more than all this, there was at this point every reason for a formal announcement of Christ in his fullest dignity, but none that we can see, for an announcement of the Father. Christ was about to speak to his churches. They remembered him, indeed, with faith and reverence; yet the impression which they retained of him was made up chiefly from his earthly life. It is true that through the eyes of his disciples, they had seen his ascending form, and through those of Stephen and Paul, they had caught a glimpse of his glory. But now he was to approach them in his full majesty, with his final and most royal commands and promises. For the Father to preface this appearance of his Son with the sudden and disconnected statement of his own eternity and power, would bear but indirectly upon the coming revelation. Moses before the bush in Horeb needed to hear the "I am" of Jehovah; so did Isaiah, and the other prophets. But it was before the glorified Redeemer that St. John waited for his commission and message; and he needed to hear the "I am" of Christ. At the least, if any shall assume that the distinctive self-announcement of the Father was re-

quired to introduce this revelation, it must have been in order to assert the Father's superior majesty, and to let all men see the difference between Jehovah, who is God, and Christ, who is only the servant of God. And yet this distinctive self-announcement, when it is made, not only bears the most familiar title of Christ, and begins in the characteristic words of Christ, but from first to last so exactly compares with the common testimony of Scripture concerning him, that the great multitude of candid and unprejudiced men read it and bow down before it, and never doubt that it is Christ who utters it.

See what warrant they have for this belief. This text proclaims, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." How closely this verse corresponds with the declarations of Christ in this same book we have already seen.

Look, then, at the epistles. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."* "He is before all things, and by him all things consist."† "Upholding all things by the word of his power."‡

* Heb. xiii. 8.

† Col. i. 17.

‡ Heb. i. 3.

Look at the Old Testament, where Isaiah, foretelling his coming, announced his name to be "the mighty God, the everlasting Father;"* and the Psalmist, afterwards authoratively interpreted in the epistle to the Hebrews, declared, "Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure. . . . Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."† What advance is it upon such expressions for Christ to declare of himself that "He is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty?"

But I wish to bring these sublime words of the Apocalypse face to face with some of those calm utterances which the evangelists have given us from their Master's lips. In him, at least, there was no prophetic transport to disturb his clear vision of eternal truth; but he "spake that he did know, and testified that he had seen." According to this plain testimony, then, he "came down from heaven," and in some true sense, he "was in heaven" even while upon earth.‡ When some of his disciples murmured at his words, he demanded, "What and if ye

* Isa. ix. 6.

† Ps. cii. 25, 27; Heb. i. 10, 12.

‡ John iii. 13.

shall see the Son of man ascend up *where he was before*.”* To the Jews, who rejected his assertion that Abraham had seen his day, he replied in one of the most striking expressions that ever fell from his lips: “Before Abraham was, I am.”† No reader of our version, who remembers the words addressed to Moses from the burning bush,‡ can forbear comparing the two passages. “I Am that I Am;” “I Am hath sent thee,” said Jehovah. “Before Abraham was, I am,” said Christ. We are told, however, that the coincidence is apparent rather than real, and that it belongs to our English translation, and not to the original Scriptures. Just the reverse is true. The most exact counterpart of the original expression of Exodus which the Greek language admits, is that which John’s gospel here gives us; and more than that, this declaration of absolute existence is illustrated in the Greek by a verbal antithesis, which does not appear in our version at all. “Before Abraham began to be, I AM.” For speaking thus, the Jews “took up stones to cast at him;” thereby proving that his words produced on them the same natural impression which they produce on us. But

* John vi. 62.

† John viii. 58.

‡ Exod. iii. 14.

Christ neither withdrew them nor explained them. There they stand, with no comment but that attempted stoning, and the undying echo of the utterance from the bush. No other words ever spoken by man at all resemble them. By their very grammar, they are beyond the pale of ordinary speech. And I know of no attempt to diminish their first and decisive impression, that is not, upon its face, unnatural and feeble.

There remains, however, another expression of our Redeemer, which, if all the rest were blotted from the gospel, would set forth his eternal majesty in unclouded light. "Father," said he in that memorable prayer which preceded his agony, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. . . . I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, Oh Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."* In these words some men profess to find no more than an allusion to a divine decree, which, indeed, was made "before the world was," but which assigned to the Messiah a future glory, upon which he was

* John xvii. 1, 4.

now, for the first time, to enter. I will not debate the matter. For a man who can bring himself to connect such an interpretation with words so full and so exact, will not be persuaded by argument to abandon his ground. But others will remember how the Redeemer had just before said, "*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go unto the Father,*" (ch. 16:28.) With those words sounding in their ears, they will listen with awe, while the same voice prays, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me *with thine own self*, with the glory which *I had with thee* before the world was." What words! Oh what words! How sacred those calm lips that spoke them! And yet this was the prayer of his humiliation, when he stood among men, anticipating his agony and death. But John saw him when the prayer had been answered; when "his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength," and "his voice as the sound of many waters." Then he said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

And now in the midst, between these answer-

ing glories of the future and of the past, and shining out like a sun above the clustering evidence of prophets and evangelists and apostles, stands forth that opening announcement of the gospel of John: "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD; AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD; AND THE WORD WAS GOD."

This then is the answer of our second question. The Son is God.

What then is the Holy Ghost? The investigation to which this question invites us will take a much narrower range. Indeed the only considerable difficulty which this title suggests, lies in its grammatical form. For while no man can doubt that the masculine names of "the Father" and "the Son" belong to persons, the title *Holy Ghost*, or *Spirit*, in the Greek, at least, as in English, is of the neuter gender, and does not of itself suggest so naturally the idea of an individual, voluntary agent. It is plain, indeed, from all the Scriptures, that this title indicates an agent of some kind, and one whose operations illustrate all the divine perfections. But is the Holy Ghost a *personal* agent? for if he is, he must be God. Or does that name belong to nothing more definite than God's effective

energy and influence? This is the only question that we need to investigate.

We are free to admit that if we were limited to the evidence which the Old Testament affords, a decisive answer of this question could hardly be furnished. There is nothing indeed in those ancient books that disproves the personality of the Holy Ghost. On the other hand, the whole complexion of their statements concerning that great agent suggests the idea of individual choice and action. But it is to the fuller evidence of the New Testament that we must look for a clear solution of this important question.

Our attention may properly be given, first of all, to the import of the name itself. The Greek word *πνεῦμα*, the radical meaning of which is *wind* or *breath*, is used very frequently in the New Testament to designate the vital or intelligent spirit of a man, in contrast with the body in which it dwells. But the idea of any such contrast, of course, cannot be included in the phrase, "Spirit of God;" for "God is a Spirit," and he has no distinctive spiritual part.

From this meaning of the word, however, results another, which, if we leave out of view, for the present, all those passages which refer to

the *Holy Spirit*, is its commonest meaning. In sixty instances out of a hundred and sixty the word πνεῦμα, *spirit*, is used in the New Testament to designate unembodied but individual spiritual beings. It is true that there is a class of commentators who do not admit the actual personality of some of the spirits thus designated. But in these cases the denial is based, not upon the grammatical meaning of the word, which cannot be mistaken, but upon the Jewish superstition, by which it is claimed the word was misapplied. When we read, then, not only of "unclean spirits," but of "ministering spirits," of God himself as "a Spirit," and of Christ as being mistaken for a "spirit," because he walked upon the water, or appeared again after his death; in each case the word includes the idea of personality. Why should the name of "the Holy Spirit" do less? It might indeed, if there were some other clear, even though less common usage of the word that might establish a lower meaning. But there is none. For if we still leave out of view the passages in debate, namely, those in which the Holy Spirit is spoken of, the word "spirit" never can be thought to stand in the New Testament for any thing like

impersonal energy, or for mere *agency*, as distinguished from a voluntary *agent*. It does sometimes designate *temper of mind*, and sometimes the concrete *effects* of the action of the Holy Spirit; and it has some other rare, but well known senses. But it bears no sense that can be transferred to the title, Holy Spirit, and yield an intelligible meaning, except that common and natural sense which has just been defined. In a word then, the use of the neuter noun, spirit, no more suggests the idea of the impersonality of the Holy Ghost, than it does that of the impersonality of the angels, or of God. But on the other hand, "the *Holy Spirit*," by that very designation, is most naturally set before us as an individual spiritual being. Those, therefore, who deny the personality of the Holy Ghost, do so, not by any warrant which they can find in the name, but in spite of its most obvious significance.

This, however, is only a small part of the truth; for the qualities and acts which are connected with this name coincide with its natural meaning, and prove that it is the name of a voluntary agent. The Spirit "led Christ,"* and

* Matt iv. 1.

“leads” all believers.* The Spirit “spoke” by the twelve disciples;† by David;‡ by Esaias;§ and by others. The Spirit is represented as “saying,” “testifying,” “revealing,” “bearing witness,” “bidding,” “forbidding,” “teaching,” “speaking expressly,” “making intercession.”|| “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost.”¶ The Spirit “worketh, . . . dividing to each man severally as he will;”** the Spirit is “grieved,”†† is “resisted,” is “tempted.”‡‡ Blasphemy is spoken against the Holy Spirit;§§ lies are told to the Holy Ghost.|||| The number of such quotations could be greatly increased, but these show the current of Scripture language concerning the Spirit of God. The name and the imputed acts then agree in defining an intelligent agent, with will and choice and feeling. It is true that there is another class of texts which represent the Spirit as being “poured out” and “given;” and still another, which describe men as being “full of” or “filled with the Holy Ghost.” But

* Rom. viii. 14.

† Acts i. 16.

‡ Acts viii. 29; John xv. 26; Luke ii. 26; Rom. viii. 16; Acts xi. 12; xvi. 6; 1 Cor. ii. 13; 1 Tim. iv. 1; Rom. viii. 26.

¶ Acts xv. 28.

** 1 Cor. xii. 11.

† Matt. x. 20.

§ Acts xxviii. 25.

†† Eph. iv. 30.

‡‡ Acts vii. 51; v. 9. §§ Mark iii. 29.

|| Acts v. 3.

these expressions, which are by no means so frequent as those of the class already quoted, are no more inconsistent with the true personality of the Holy Ghost, than are the expressions, "partakers of Christ," and "putting on Christ," inconsistent with the personality of the Son. By a common metonymy, the reference in each case is either to the work or to the characteristic qualities of the Spirit, or of Christ.

From this mass of consistent evidence a few texts deserve to be singled out, as crowning and completing the whole. One of these is our Saviour's well known promise of the Spirit as a Comforter. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."* Christ, the first Comforter of his disciples, was a person. It was natural to think that the second Comforter would be a person as well. But let us notice our Saviour's description of the way in which this office was to be discharged. "He (*ἐκείνος*) shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance," (v. 26.) "*He* shall testify of me," (ch. 15: 26.) "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I

* John xiv. 16.

will send *him* (αὐτὸν) unto you. And when *he* (ἐκεῖνος)* is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. (ch. 16: 8, 9.) “Howbeit, when *he*, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of *himself* (ἑαυτοῦ,) but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak. . . *He* shall glorify me,” (v. 13: 14.) These expressions are scattered through three chapters of calm discourse; and the idea of finding in them the sustained personification of an impersonal agency would never occur to an impartial mind. Let us compare them with two other passages. “The Holy Spirit said, Separate *unto me* (μοι) Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”† “In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise; *who* (ὅς) is the earnest of our

* No grammatical necessity called for this new pronoun. Some think that the gender of αὐτὸν above was decided only by the attraction of ὁ Παράκλητος; and then we ask what decided the use of such a noun? But the introduction of this emphatic ἐκεῖνος in the eighth verse was quite gratuitous, unless it was used for the purpose of setting forth the true personality of the Holy Ghost. In the thirteenth verse, moreover, this same pronoun occurs again, although it is removed from the masculine Παράκλητος by five full verses, and by a change in the discourse, (see v. 12,) while only a comma separates it from the neuter τὸ Πνεῦμα which follows it.

† Acts xiii. 2.

inheritance."* All these pronouns "he," "himself," "me," "who," point plainly, not to an energy or an influence, but to a person.

But still more direct and decisive is the proof furnished by the apostolic benediction, which brings together the three names, of the Lord Jesus Christ, of God, and of the Holy Ghost, in one equal invocation. And by the side of that exact and solemn formula belongs our text, which is the most unanswerable demonstration of the personality of the Spirit that the Scriptures contain. No argument that can be built upon it is so strong as its own simple words, and every attempt to explain away the solid proof that is in them is little better than a confession of a desperate cause. "Baptizing them *into the name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

It will give us a juster view of the evidence upon which we have now been dwelling, if we remember how large a place the name and work of the Holy Spirit occupy in the New Testament. They enter not only into every book, but into every form of inspired instruction; into narratives and discourses, into statements of doc-

* Eph. i. 13, 14.

trine and rules of duty, into prayers and warnings and promises and prophecies; and everywhere they suggest the same predominant idea of an individual and voluntary actor. The word Spirit is applied in the New Testament to the Holy Ghost more than two hundred and fifty times, which is oftener, by a hundred times, than it is used in all other senses put together. In this application it has no synonym. We have two words in our version, *Ghost* and *Spirit*; the Greek has but one; and no paraphrase, even, ever takes its place. Throughout the book it is just one clear, distinctive name for a distinctive agent. The attempt to resolve this constant and uniform name into a figure of speech is hopeless. The testimony which the New Testament bears to the personality of the Holy Spirit is not only full and unequivocal, but it is so full that no addition could be made to it, except in one direction, namely, by the visible personality of a physical life like that of Christ. The personality of a pure Spirit cannot be more distinctly attested by human language than is that of the Spirit of God.

Since the Holy Ghost then is not only divine, but a divine person, we have reached the

answer of our third question. The Holy Ghost is God.

It is important to notice that the two arguments for the Godhead of the Son and of the Holy Ghost supplement and establish each other; partly, indeed, because all the intrinsic mystery of a trinity would be found in a duality, so that if the Godhead of the Son can be established, the Godhead of the Holy Ghost can the more readily be accepted. But much more than this is true. The material of the two arguments is widely different, and where the one can possibly be thought to be weak, the other has unlimited force to lend to it. Let us remember that we know of just those three most sacred names which are grouped in this text. The Scriptures contain no hint by which the boldest speculator can be encouraged to add to them. Now our attempt has been to discover what natures are covered by these names, and since we have found two elements to attach to each, namely, a true divinity, and a true personality, we have said of each that he is God. But no one can fail to see that the parts of our argument, as of every argument on this subject, have been very

unevenly balanced. We have adduced no proof of the *personality* of the Father, nor of the Son; and no proof of the *divinity* of the Father, nor of the Spirit; and that simply because those facts are too plain to admit of argument. Of the Son we *have* attempted to prove that he is *divine*; and now we insist upon the fact that his name stands grouped with those of the Father and the Spirit, the true *divinity* of which is beyond all question. Of the Spirit we have attempted to prove that he is a *person*; and now we insist that he stands grouped with the Father and the Son, whose true *personality* is beyond all question. So that, even if there were far less of particular proof of the divinity of Christ, and of the personality of the Holy Ghost, each of these names which are so closely related, not only in special texts, but in all the Gospel scheme, would qualify and define the other. The separate evidences of the Trinity lie scattered through the Scriptures like the hewn stones of Solomon in their mountain quarries. But they come together a shapely temple. Walls and arches brace each other, and the appointed edifice knits itself together, as strong as the everlasting hills.

The result to which our investigations have led us we have already announced in these three conclusions :

The Father is God ;

The Son is God ;

The Holy Ghost is God.

In behalf of these conclusions, we claim,

I. That they are not only warranted, but required by the current of Scripture language. This claim we have attempted to make good in all our argument. But it is proper to allude to the difficulties and shifts to which those are driven who attempt to reconcile any different conclusions with the statements of the Bible. The constant need they have not only of altering the accepted version, but of wresting the grammar and the text of the original Scriptures, and, especially, of interpreting by violent figures the most direct and didactic utterances, is a confession that the Bible, as it stands, may most naturally be thought to teach that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God, as well as the Father. In making this claim, however, we do not maintain that there is no instance in which the words of Scripture may seem to conflict with the one or the other of our conclusions. For, in regard to these

great truths as well as others, the language of one part of Scripture may seem to oppose that of another. We know however that in every such instance the opposition is seeming only, and not real; and the duty of a wise interpreter must always be to stand by the clearer and preponderating testimony, even though he may be unable to make a perfect explanation of an isolated utterance which may seem to clash with it. Thus the omniscience of the Son is established by abundant and unequivocal testimony, both direct and implied. If, then, in a single unparalleled instance, the Son be said "not to know," the truth of that statement, of course, is not to be denied; but the words must be interpreted in some restricted and exceptional sense, which will consist with the prevailing evidence to which they appear to be opposed. The instinct of faith and piety is competent to deal promptly and safely with such an apparent inconsistency; for no man at all imbued with that regard of Christ which all the Scriptures inspire, can help believing, that in whatever sense it was true that his prophetic mind "knew not the day nor the hour"* of the fulfilment of his prophecy,

* Mark xiii. 32.

there was another and a larger sense in which it was not possible that the Son of God should be ignorant of them. The passages which suggest any such difficulties, however, are but few in number, and the one just referred to is the most considerable of them all. They oppose no real obstacle to that steady and consistent current of Scripture testimony which we have been reviewing.

II. But we claim that these conclusions are not only scriptural but intelligible. Faith deals with ideas, and where there is no idea there can be no faith. But when the Scriptures teach that the Son is God, or that the Holy Ghost is God, each of those propositions includes an idea as definite and as cognizable as that Paul was a man, or that John was a man. The mind to which either of those propositions may be presented, ordinarily measures its meaning with perfect ease, and adopts or rejects it; as when it decides "the Son is God," or "the Son is not God, but only man," or "the Son is of the nature of God, but is not God." A man may find reason, then, for withholding his faith from the conclusions which we have stated; but it cannot be upon the ground that either of

them does not propose an intelligible idea. He rejects them not because there is nothing in them to believe, but because he believes them to be false.

III. But we claim, in the third place, that these three intelligible conclusions are not inconsistent either with each other or with any known truth. The truth which is most commonly and confidently quoted against them is that of the unity of God; a dogma to which the Scriptures assign the greatest importance, and which lies at the foundation of all faith and all philosophy. Now if those same Scriptures could be thought to teach that the Father is one God, and the Son another God, and the Spirit a third God, this fundamental dogma of the unity of God would effectually correct so dangerous an interpretation. But when they seem to teach that the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, the fact that God is one cannot be made to oppose these statements, unless it can first be shown how much or how little can subsist within the nature of that one God. To say of a man that he is one person and a second, and a third, and all this at the same moment would be absurd.

But to think that God could create a being who should, in some real sense, have a two-fold or a threefold personality is not absurd. Nor can it be absurd to believe that such a threefold personality may consist with the one nature of God. A priori reasonings on such a subject are mere guesses; for since there is but one God, we have no analogy to enlighten us. And we have no revelation but just that which at least suggests our doctrine. For a man to stand up, then, against the probable meaning of the Bible, and to decide that God who is known to be one in one fundamental sense, cannot, in another sense, be Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, is an assumption as weak as it is arrogant.

IV. We claim, then, in the fourth place, that no objection of reason is to be alleged against either of the three conclusions we have announced unless it be this; that it is impossible for us to explain or to understand the *relations* in which those three facts can co-exist: that is, we cannot understand how one God can be Father and Son and Holy Ghost—a kind of objection which would unsettle all human knowledge, and make a man as sceptical about himself as he

could be about a trinity. All facts are related. If a man, therefore, could know any fact in all its relations, his knowledge would be infinite. Such knowledge belongs only to God. We are made to know what we need to know: that is, we know facts in their relation to ourselves, when we do not at all know their relations to each other; and we know the relations of facts to each other chiefly when those relations in some way involve our duty or our safety, and so demand our action. Thus we need to know that food supports life, since we have to provide and partake of it. But how food nourishes us we do not know, for the process demands no care of ours. That the magnetic needle points to the pole we need to know, for we are to be guided by it; but why it points to the pole we do not need to know, for it points thither always, whether we watch it or not. Thus if the Son is God and the Holy Ghost is God, we may need to know these facts for our comfort and salvation; but how the Son and the Holy Ghost can be God we can hardly need to know, for their Godhead can in no way depend upon our knowledge or our action. The fundamental rule of all science is, that every fact must stand upon

its own evidence ; and a fact adequately attested must stand securely, though no theory can be conceived of that will account for it. It is in this way that every science grows up. We know in points, not in systems. The separate stars, as we gaze, form themselves into constellations, and we give them names, but still the twinkling points hang asunder by boundless spaces, which we cannot lessen. In whatever direction we push our analysis, we come at length to elements which will not be analyzed, and are dumb with wonder before the moving wing of an insect, or the striped petal of a flower. With what propriety does a man, who consents to this restriction on every hand, cavil at the mystery of God, and concerning him alone refuse to believe, because he cannot understand !

It will be objected, perhaps, that the mysteries of nature are mere concealments, obscure indeed, but not perplexing ; while this dogma of one God in three persons, if not self-contradictory, is scarcely less ; and that therefore our reason, which acquiesces in the former, is not bound to accept the latter. But the plea will not stand. There are exact statements of natural and scientific facts. which the most acute mind, if it be

uninformed and self-confident, will be sure to reject as falsehoods. Will a tropical savage believe that water ever becomes solid, so that men can walk on it? Let it be said that a message can be dispatched from Boston on a given morning at 10 o'clock, which shall reach St. Louis at 9 o'clock of the same morning, and most men, who have not the clue, would pronounce the statement absurd. If one of our forefathers had heard that there were whole nations on the earth who walked in a position the perpendicular reverse of his own, the statement would have seemed at least marvellous. If it had been added that those nations still walked not with their heads to the earth, but with their feet, the inconsistent story might have been rejected with contempt.

But these perhaps will be called mere riddles, which a little knowledge is adequate to solve. But so it always is. All mysteries yield to knowledge. Are there no moral riddles which solve themselves only in the knowledge of God? If that same intellectual temper which pronounces against the possibility of a trinity, could have entertained the abstract question, whether a God of perfect goodness and power could suffer

the existence of sin and wretchedness in a race to be counted by millions, and to be reproduced through hundreds of generations, what verdict would it have given? And now that the rigid and awful facts are here, what can it do but endure the bewilderment which it cannot escape? And yet amidst the dumbness of its helpless confusion, it finds breath to assert that the Son and the Spirit cannot be God, because it cannot understand how they can be!

With equal helplessness does human reason attempt to deal with those stubborn opposites—the absolute sovereignty of God, and the responsible freedom of men. Consciousness asserts the one, and an infallible philosophy asserts the other; and the word of God establishes them both. But “they stand aloof,” with a chasm between them. No bridge spans the gulf. No circling footpath has ever forded it. The apparent contradiction is absolute, and the only reconciliation which any wise man attempts is the modest confession of his bewilderment, coupled with the firm persuasion that they must be consistent, because they are true.

We struggle in vain against these astounding mysteries. We know only what God makes us

know. We know nothing by native right, or by native power. But he supplies to our complex natures such elements of truth as are necessary for our safety and growth. Some of these elements are near and simple, and concern our mortal life; and these we learn to appropriate for ourselves. Some of them are vast and remote, and concern our relations to God and eternity; and these we take not by our senses or our reason, but from his lips. They stand out as separate and as different from common things as our souls and God are different from the material world. They are not proposed as a complete system, nor can we make them such. They are that part of the system which we need to know of *now*—the fixed stars which we sail by—the separate suns with unseen worlds and forces all around them—the radiant outskirts of his tabernacle who “dwelleth in light inaccessible.” A man may hold that a revelation is needless and impossible, and then of course he will discard the Bible and all its mysteries. But if he accepts that book as the word of God, how shall he dare to complain that the discovery it makes of infinite things leaves more in the darkness than it brings

into the light, and awes him with wonders which he cannot fathom ?

V. But we claim, once more, that while these great truths cannot be defined by human reason, they are yet illustrated and established by human experience. All knowledge is fruitful. Even natural science brings forth no empty facts ; but on the heels of every discovery comes the occasion for its use : and every achievement of the chemist or explorer at last adds to the material of human duty and feeling. The truths of revelation have been successively unfolded by the same rule, and the transcendent facts of the New Testament have been committed to men as one chief agency in God's method of salvation. They were never meant for the intellect only, but through the intellect they were given to the heart, which they were appointed to fill with "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!" No single truth in all the Bible, therefore, is speculative merely. Least of all are those speculative truths which concern the Godhead of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. There is not an element of our moral nature to which those great ideas do not appeal, and on which they do not leave a deep impression. Now, in

common things we know truth from error both by its form and by its effects. That which every day reveals new beauties, and every day bears richer fruit, must be the truth. We demand that the doctrine of the true divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit shall be tried by this test.

First of all let the spiritual *understanding* decide whether the Christian scheme gains or loses when these doctrines are stricken from it; whether a gospel without a divine Redeemer and a personal Sanctifier and Comforter seems the larger or the smaller in the estimate of the mere intellect. From every soul that ever came in living contact with these truths the answer is ready; that the idea of an atonement for sinful men provided by God the Father, accomplished by God the Son, and applied by God the Holy Ghost, is, beyond comparison, the grandest idea that ever came into the minds of men. There is no element of strength or of goodness, of beauty or tenderness, which it does not embrace. All worlds and all creatures are contemplated in its boundless scope. The darkest problems of nature and sin become clearer under its light, and the dim issues of eternity shine out with

vivid glory. With this great conception, so consistent, so far-reaching, the thoughtful mind fills itself, and is satisfied as with the wisdom of God. Strange triumph for superstition and error! When before has falsehood led men into such a mountain top, and awed and soothed them with sights and sounds from "the most excellent glory?"

But still stronger testimony to these great truths is borne by spiritual *feeling*. The most exalted and delightful emotion ever felt by a human soul is love for a divine Redeemer. Leave the whole story of the Gospel as it stands; but take out of it the one element of the true Godhead of him "who loved us, and gave himself for us," and you have narrowed the range of human feeling; you have thrown back into the soul of piety the keenest and most grateful affections, the most tender and delicate and ennobling sympathies that ever sprang from it. And what have you done with its motives? and what with its joy of a daily intercourse with an omnipresent Saviour? and what with the material of its heavenly hope? Deny the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, and you have taken from men all the inspiring conscious-

ness of God dwelling in them. The awe, the comfort, that sacred sense of personal duty, and worth, and safety, which belong to a soul in constant and closest contact with a personal God—all are exchanged for the idea of an indwelling energy, divine indeed, but impersonal and passionless. The doctrines which are thus discarded are the very ones by which heaven and God are brought down to the earth, and men are wrapped in divine sympathy and glory. When they are taken away, God himself is withdrawn. The weightiest words of the Gospel are emptied of meaning and of comfort; the vital utterances of salvation become incongruous mottoes of mere wisdom and morality; and a faith, scarcely warmer than philosophy, helplessly peers through nature and through Scripture after a dim and distant God.

But these doctrines reach further than to intellect and feeling. They have moulded from the beginning their own form of Christian *character*. It could not be otherwise. The man who really believes that the eternal God took on him the nature of men, and that this divine Redeemer died on the cross to save his soul from eternal death, that he now lives to claim his ser-

vice, to guide and support him with daily care and help, to reward him with daily love, and to welcome him to heaven—such a man will lack no motive to enthusiastic duty. And it is safe to point, not indeed to every pretended worshipper of a divine Saviour, but to the great company of his worshippers in every age, as furnishing the highest type of self-denying virtue which the world has ever seen. We disparage the virtue of no other men; and for ourselves we make no claim: but for our brethren in every land of Christendom, and on every heathen shore, for the great multitude who, in public and in private, with daily faith and zeal nourished at the cross of their God and Saviour, show to the world the purest piety, the sincerest devotion to the glory of God and the good of men—for these we claim that they give proof of the doctrines which they cherish, and show them to be the truths of God. “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” If Christ be less than God, to honor him as God is a fearful error; and if the Bible has given adequate warning against such error, it becomes a fearful sin. And yet this bitter root springs up into all the fragrance and fruitfulness of the most systematical piety. Not into fanati-

cism, grotesque with unhealthy excitement; not into asceticism; but into piety, beautiful with all social virtues and graceful tastes, in sympathy with everything that ennobles human life, and steadfast in the hope of heaven. A manhood as perfect as the world ever sees, grows out of a fundamental error and absurdity, and this the world over. Sow the seed where you will, and it bears the same fruit. What would the world have lost if that type of piety had never been in it? Let every interest of justice, and philanthropy, and patriotism answer, from Huguenot France, from Calvinistic Holland, and Scotland, and England, and America. What would the world lose if Trinitarian piety and zeal were stricken from it to-day? Surely the providence of God has failed, to frown upon our doctrine; and equally failed to favor those who oppose it. A handful of men stand up in the face of the Christian world and warn it of its wrong and folly: they marshal all their arguments, and all their objections: good men hear them; wise men hear them, but are not convinced. Other errors, of science and of government, are exploded with every generation; but this lasts on. Wider and wider it spreads, and "the wilderness and the solitary place is made

glad for it, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose." And the little company of objectors still wonder and protest. Was the truth ever so unfortunate! Or did error ever maintain so stable and so beneficent a sway!

See what the error is. It is idolatry; for it gives the glory of Jehovah to another. It is the most dangerous idolatry that the world has ever seen; for the worship of common idols is nourished by ignorance and barbarism, but the worship of Christ braves all the light of civilization and knowledge. The worship of common idols gives way before God's word; but the worshippers of Christ draw their very warrant from the Bible. When it sets before them the majesty and the perfection of God, they claim them for their Redeemer. When it leads them full of awe to the throne of God, they claim to see their Redeemer upon it. They take the transcendent praises of saints and angels, and pour them unaltered into the ear of Christ. The earth is ringing with the perverted worship; and it spreads from temple to temple, and from land to land. Where will it end? It will never end! for "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are

in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

But will the mystery ever be solved? We cannot tell. If it shall be, another mystery shall rise up behind it. Unless, indeed, we shall at length be like God and know all things—an issue which no wise man will expect or desire. For our intellectual enjoyment lies not so much in knowing, as in coming to know; and for a man to have uncovered the last truth, and to have solved the last mystery, would make the universe a prison to him. The glittering walls of his own knowledge would stand up about him, and leave him no open door on any side. To know all things and to control all things is to be God. But for a dependent man to know all things would be to lose the possibility of faith and hope, and of all characteristic human interest. The mysteries of God are the storehouse of our eternal wealth. I would visit them, but I would not exhaust them. I would penetrate the darkness, but I would not explore it. Like the traveller who, walking on the level bank of the placid river, catches a view of the far-off

mountains where it has its source; I would journey on toward the distant peaks. The road grows rugged, but he would not have it smoother. He has reached and mounted the first blue hills, but the mighty terraces swell up before him. With patient feet he scales them one by one, and yet higher and higher beyond them mount the pure white summits which he seeks. Will he grieve that he cannot scale them too? Would he lay a measuring line on their lofty heads, or pitch his tent upon their slippery sides. Must he follow the trackless courses of their hidden streams, or uncover "their sunless pillars deep in earth?" No, they are not for that. Let them stand in their separate majesty, where no foot can reach them. The reverent eye of the pilgrim can see them. The changing light of morning and of evening will engrave clear outlines on their massive fronts, and brighten their snowy plains with gleams of glory. Who would abate their unapproachable grandeur? There is not an eye that does not bless them; there is not a field for a hundred leagues that is not greener for them, nor a fountain nor a pool which their clouded heads do not supply. So stands forth in the universe the being and the

thought of God. "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." It is enough that we are brought face to face with this great truth. Its deep foundations we shall never see. Its summits of glory we shall never scale. To us the heavy shadows that lie between them may never be lessened. But the stable strength, the crowning splendor, the sheltering presence, the endless discovery and the endless joy, the issuing river clear as crystal, and the green pastures beside its still waters—all these, which are nothing else than "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,"—these are ours for ever.

The Resurrection of the Body.

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X.

"And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter."
—Acts xvii. 32.

For this collision of philosophy and faith, the clash of which resounds in our text, no fitter place could have been found than the Areopagus; and on the side of faith, no better champion than the great Apostle to the Gentiles. Plato and Aristotle, it is true, had long been dead, and the Greek philosophy was in its decrepitude; but its older teachings were still remembered, and the pupil of Gamaliel well knew what they were. The perfections, sovereignty, and proper worship of God, of which Paul spoke, were doctrines which he had a right to expect would command the assent of his Athenian auditory. Nor, on the other hand, probably, was he surprised to hear them mock at the resurrection of the dead. Between these two branches of doctrine there yawned the gulf,

which divides the religion of nature from the religion of revelation.

In discussing the topic assigned me, I remark in the first place :

I. That the resurrection of the body is specifically a doctrine, not of reason, but of revelation.

Some of our Christian doctrines belong as well to the sphere of reason as of revelation. Such at least are these doctrines of so-called natural religion : the immutability of right ; the existence and perfections of God ; the sacredness of duty towards God and towards man ; the immortality of the soul ; and future rewards and punishments. These we call Christian doctrines, not because they came in with Christianity, and are distinctive of it, but only because they go to make up the completeness of the system. It need not be claimed, that these doctrines actually antedate all revelation, thus ignoring, what we have so much reason for affirming, a direct communion between God and man, coeval with humanity itself ; but it may be claimed, and conceded, that the doctrines we have named are so germane and palpable to human reason, as easily to be retained, or readily recovered, by

those amongst whom the echoes of that primal revelation may have died almost or entirely out. It is enough that they have in our moral constitution a firm basis of their own, independent of every special revelation, whether Paradisiacal, Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian. It is enough, that they might still challenge the faith of thoughtful men over the very sepulchre of Christianity itself, should Christianity be hunted down.

There are other Christian doctrines, however, not thus belonging to the sphere of reason. Reason may indeed accept them, and accept them cordially; but they must first have been revealed. Such preëminently is the doctrine of an essential Trinity of Persons eternally immanent in the Godhead, having its historic counterpart in the economy of redemption, and not without its types, when we have once been roused to look for them, both in external nature, and in the trinal constitution of man himself. And yet this high doctrine is not, and never could have been, a discovery of reason. When once revealed, there are analogies enough to lend it confirmation, but these analogies could not have suggested it. And so it has come to pass, that while there are trinal forms of thought

pertaining to the Godhead, there is no objective, real Trinity in any pagan philosophy either of the Orient or of the Occident.

So likewise of this doctrine of the resurrection of the body. It is, indeed, by no means irrational, as might easily be shown. When once apprehended, analogies not a few may be marshalled in its support. But, in spite of all this, the doctrine must in the first instance have been revealed. It does not lie in the line of natural suggestion. It holds no place among the instinctive beliefs of men. Nay, mere human speculation, unaided from above, pronounces emphatically against it. Every scholar knows, that those ancient pagan sages, who affirmed most positively the immortality of the soul, spoke always most scornfully of the body. According to Plato's famous illustration, the soul is in the body like a man sitting chained in a cave with his back towards the light.* According to Plotinus, the Neo-Platonist, the embodiment of the soul is "a bondage and a burial."† To such thinkers death must be of course a welcome deliverance, and any thing like a

* Near the beginning of the 7th Book of the *Republic*.

† *Enneades* of Plotinus, 4 : 8 : 3.

reëmbodiment must needs be looked upon as a retrogression, the remanding of an escaped convict to his hated cell. The Christian hope of rising from the dead, is sneered at by Celsus as "a hope worthy only of worms."* Even the Jewish faith on this point is ambiguously referred to by Josephus, out of deference to Greek and Roman scepticism.† He had not the moral courage clearly to state a doctrine so offensive to the cultured pagans, for whom he wrote. From worm to butterfly, was the classic symbol of immortality. From butterfly back again to worm, must have been the symbol of the resurrection. Nor is this stern dualism of the philosophers contradicted by the first impressions of the multitude. There is a common prejudice against the body as an irksome clog upon the salient spirit. The nobler men are, the less they dread the rending of these fetters of flesh and sense. The day of death is hailed as the birth-day of an eternal freedom. Soul and body part company apparently forever. While the invisible part of man is instinctively felt to be immortal, the visible and material part seems doomed to irretrievable dissolution. No sooner

* *Contra Celsum*, 5 : 14.

† *Antiquities*, 18 : 1 : 3.

is the spiritual tenant released, than the tenement begins to crumble. The instant the soul is gone, the eye glazes, the limbs stiffen, and loathsome decay begins. The loved spirit is dismissed with the tenderest benedictions; but the loved body of the dearest friend is surrendered in anguish to the impatient worms. Like a dead tree, or any other dead organism, its particles hasten to fly apart. What was a human body, superb in its mechanism, warm with emotion, and radiant with thought, is by and by mixed up with baser organisms, or floats off in exhalations upon the air.

Now what human genius shall dare to guess, that this dissolved body is some day to be revived; or that the soul shall ever again be clothed upon with any body, which may properly be called identical with the body which rots in its grave? The Egyptians, it is true, embalmed their dead, because it was imagined, that after some thousands of years of transmigrations, the soul would return to re-occupy its old abode. The Bactrian Zoroaster appears also to have taught the resurrection of the body. But with these two notable exceptions, the verdict of pagan antiquity is unanimous against the doc-

trine. Zoroaster and the Egyptians must consequently have got this doctrine from some other oracle than human reason.

II. Let us pass, therefore, from the sphere of reason, to the sphere of revelation.

The problem is, to discover, if possible, the genesis of this doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The task is not an easy one, and something must needs be left to conjecture.

There are those who say, that there is no trace of this doctrine in the Pentateuch, nor in the Psalms ; and that consequently it came late into the Hebrew creed. But then it is also said, and with equal assurance, that even the immortality of the soul is not taught in the Pentateuch, and is but faintly adumbrated in the Psalms. We admit, with Warburton, that temporal, and not eternal, penalties were employed by Moses to enforce the requirements of his code. But when we consider the prominent part which eternal penalties played in the Egyptian legislation, under which Moses was reared, his silence on this subject is easily accounted for. The Hebrew mind came out of Egypt, must have come out of Egypt, com-

pletely saturated with this doctrine. * The Hebrew legislator could well afford to intermit a lesson so thoroughly learned. What he proposed was to build up a puissant commonwealth, standing square and solid upon the solid ground. What he thought indispensable to this, under the circumstances, was a legislation, whose penalties should hang low in the sky, ready to fall promptly and heavily upon guilty heads. Hence the comparative silence of the Pentateuch in regard to the immortality of the soul. To argue from this silence, so easily explained, that the doctrine in question was unknown, to say that the founders and heroes of the Hebrew commonwealth, when they spoke of being "gathered to their fathers," thought of nothing better than the dreamless slumber of the grave, would be an unpardonable rashness of assumption. It would be monstrous to think of Moses, whose countrymen had been for more than two centuries in the valley of the Nile, and who had himself mastered all the wisdom of the Egyptians, as gathering his mantle about him amongst the mountains of Moab, awaiting a blow which should smite him utterly out of existence.

In regard, however, to the resurrection of the

body, the case is not so clear. It was, to be sure, the opinion of Irenæus,* and others of the early Christian Fathers, that the translation of Enoch in the Patriarchal age, was a demonstration, not merely of the immortality of the soul, but also, and equally, of the resurrection of the body; a demonstration repeated after the Deluge, amongst the Hebrews, by the translation of Elijah. But to this it may be objected, that the Greek and Roman mythologies had also their translations: of Persephone, of Ganymede, of Romulus, while yet there was no idea of a resurrection of the body. Translation, it may be urged, is not resurrection. It is one thing, we may be told, for a living body to be caught up and borne away; but quite another thing for a dead body to be revived. And yet the impression actually made, and the lesson actually inculcated, by these translations of Enoch and Elijah, it must be conceded, may have been greatly in advance of what is now deemed logically legitimate. Or at least it is easy to conceive, that, in connection with these startling events, there may have been Divine communications, setting forth with equal clearness the

* *Adversus Haereses*, 5 : 5 : 1.

immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body. Surely there is no better way of accounting for the Egyptian and Zoroastrian teachings, already referred to, than by assuming for them the parentage of an early express revelation. This, of course, is only conjecture; but conjecture restrained within the narrowest possible limits, and required in solving a problem otherwise insoluble. What human speculation, in its proudest achievements amongst the subtle Greeks, appears always to have spurned as an offence to reason, it must be admitted, is not very likely to have been invented on the banks either of the Oxus or the Nile; and is therefore far more likely to have been communicated in the earliest ages by God himself. Zoroaster and the Egyptians may thus have done no more than transmit a tradition, which for mankind at large had perished. And certainly if the Egyptian dead were bitumened, and swathed, and deposited in costly tombs, in expectation of a renewed embodiment of the soul, it would not be wise to say, that the carrying up of the embalmed bodies of the Patriarchs out of Egypt into Palestine, had no reference to the resurrection of the last great day. While there is

nothing to forbid, there is much to favor the assumption, that the Hebrews bore with them through the desert a good hope, not only of the immortality of the soul, but also of the resurrection of the body. The alleged silence of the Pentateuch must be allowed no greater weight against the latter doctrine than against the former.

The earliest distinct intimation of the doctrine of the resurrection in the Hebrew Scriptures, is an open question. Theodoret recognized the appearance of this doctrine in the 104th Psalm; as some in our day still appeal with confidence to Psalm xvii. 15, and Job xix. 25-27. If these passages be given up, as probably they should be, we come next to Isaiah xxvi. 19: "*Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.*" And although the prophet is here speaking of the rehabilitation of the Hebrew people after their return from the Babylonian exile, of this, probably, and of nothing else, it must be confessed, that the imagery employed has the appearance of having been suggested and shaped by an

inspired vision of the final resurrection of the dead. Admit the presence and pressure of this stupendous vision, and the rhetoric of the passage is liable to no charge of extravagance. One event has simply taken its color and its clothing from another event of far grander moment. Isaiah's faith rises to the level of what was assumed to be the faith of Moses and the Hebrews of the Exodus; and there is consequently nothing left to be supplied by Zoroastrian teachers in Babylon. While thus denying the Zoroastrian origin of the Hebrew doctrine of the resurrection of the body, we must not fail to notice the greater emphasis put upon this doctrine after the return of the Hebrews from Babylon to Palestine. The beginning of this new emphasis appears, indeed, in one of the Prophets of the captivity. In the last chapter of the Book of Daniel we read : "*And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*" Such boldness and brevity of announcement are indicative of any thing but novelty of doctrine. The impression is fairly made upon us, that this doctrine was well accredited as a familiar part of the

Hebrew creed; not now just learned on the banks of the Euphrates, but a tradition from the remotest antiquity. And yet, as we have said, from this time onwards the doctrine assumes new prominence. It is a well-known fact, that faith in this doctrine powerfully inspired the prowess of the Maccabees. In one of the Apocryphal books of that heroic period in Jewish history, the idea is expressed, that the immortality of the soul without the resurrection of the body, would be a comparatively shadowy boon.* Such certainly was the common faith of the Jewish people in the time of Christ. Only the Sadducees and Essenes were sceptics on this point; and they were but small fractions of the people. Martha, the Jewish maiden, uttered only the prevalent conviction, when she said of her dead brother: "*I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*"† When Paul stood before the Sanhedrim, he adroitly turned its storm of wrath away from himself against the accusing Sadducees, by ranging himself with the Pharisees in the emphasis he put

* 2 Mac. xii. 44. "For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead."

† John xi. 24.

upon the resurrection of the dead. "*Men and brethren,*" said he, "*I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee ; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.*"*

Christianity accordingly put forward nothing new in affirming the resurrection of the body. And yet the doctrine certainly underwent an immense enhancement of vividness and power. The root of this lies deep in the very genius of Christianity itself. The old dualistic scorn of matter had been sublimely rebuked by the Incarnation of God in Christ. The human body, which philosophy had denounced as a dungeon and a tomb, had been made a temple of the Holy Ghost. For three and thirty years a divine man had lived in Palestine. And when soul and body were rent asunder upon the cross, it was that they might re-unite in triumph after a brief slumber of the body in Joseph's tomb. This was indeed the inauguration of a new stadium in human history. The resurrection of the body was no longer a fond hope, but an accomplished fact. No wonder it stands forth so prominently in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles. No wonder the proclamation of

* Acts xxiii. 6-8.

that fact went waving over the world, more potent than the old banner of the Maccabees, cheering on new heroes to martyrdom.

III. But before examining the New Testament for its particulars of doctrine in this matter, let us now, in the third place, glance briefly at the opinions hitherto entertained in the Christian Church in regard to the resurrection of the body.

The Gnostics, like the ascetic Essenes, denied this doctrine. But the Catholic Fathers of the early Church affirmed it with the greatest ardor and energy. They taught, however, a resurrection, not of the body merely, but also of the flesh. Their notions of identity required a reproduction of the self-same particles of matter, which had been dissolved and scattered by death. Athenagoras of Athens, the author of an elaborate treatise on the resurrection, in dealing with the objection, that the particles composing human bodies, may, after dissolution, be taken up into inferior organisms, vegetable or animal, and through this circuit find their way back again into other human bodies, went so far as to deny the possibility of this. Human flesh, he

said, may indeed be devoured by wild beasts, or birds, or fishes, but can never be digested. What has once belonged to a human organism is sacred, and can never become a part of tree, or beast, or bird, or fish, and so can never by any such, or any other process, enter another human organism. Against any catastrophe of that sort, he found an effectual barrier in the omniscience and omnipotence of God. Tertullian of Northern Africa also wrote a treatise equally sensuous in its theory of the resurrection. Indeed, this was the universally accepted theory of the times; recommended, doubtless, by the fact that Christ evidently rose in a real fleshly body, the assumption being, that the body which came out of the tomb of Joseph, came out glorified, and ready to ascend.

Origen of Alexandria was the first to controvert this gross theory. He labored hard to distinguish between the essence and the form of the body. His statement was, that the resurrection body will be the same as that which dies and is buried, but not of the same kind.* If, as some allege, he denied the identity of the two, it is plain enough that he did not mean to

* Σῶμα τοῦτο ἔσται. 'ἀλλ' οὐ τοιοῦτο. *De Principiis*, 2 : 10.

deny it. Against Celsus he maintained, without faltering, the derided doctrine. His great solicitude was simply to clear the doctrine of manifest absurdities. He aimed only to develop the Pauline idea of a spiritual body, replacing in its time this crude body of flesh and blood. Several eminent Fathers, such as Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Chrysostom of Constantinople, accepted this finer theory. But the outcry which was raised against Origen as a rash and heretical thinker, eventually overwhelmed nearly all his distinctive speculations in one common disrepute. Both East and West the Church sprang back, with a violent rebound, to the grossest conceptions in regard to the resurrection body. Enoch, it was said by Jerome, was translated in the flesh. Elijah also was carried up in the flesh into heaven. Our resurrection bodies must therefore be bodies of veritable flesh and blood. Teeth will not be required for the mastication of food, it is true, but the wicked will need them in order to gnash, and gnaw their tongues.* The more sober and solid Augustine, though at first inclined to the view of Origen, subsequently gave in to the

* See his *Contra Johannem Hierosolymitanum*, §§ 28-33.

grosser theory. So likewise Gregory the Great, the last eminent theologian of the West, and John of Damascus, the last eminent theologian of the East, both of whom teach the resurrection of the flesh, and the latter of whom inveighs especially against the scouted heresy of Origen. And so the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh, passed down into the Middle Ages as the established doctrine of the Church. Such a form of statement was in keeping with the rudeness of the times. The Christian mythology could easily be finer than the mythology of either Teuton or Scandinavian, without rising above the coarseness of Jerome or Gregory the Great. The Roman Church, we admit, had a desperate battle to wage with the hirsute and stormy Titans of central and northern Europe, and of course was sorely tempted to rule them, as best she might, by rites of worship and by forms of doctrine adjusted to their mental, moral, and social state; and although she triumphed in the end, she stands justly censured at the bar of history for having descended so far towards the Barbarian level, when she might, by simpler rites and purer doctrines, have lifted the Barbarians to a higher level of her own.

Since the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, the eschatology of the Church, like almost every other department of Christian doctrine, has undergone revision. In regard to the resurrection, the drift of opinion has been towards the resurrection of the body, in distinction from the resurrection of the flesh. New theories of identity have obviated the necessity of asserting, that in order to a genuine resurrection of the body, there must be a reproduction of numerically the same particles of matter, which endured the mortal agony, and went down into the dust. The true theory of identity may, or may not as yet, have been broached. But in this at least the best thinkers are now agreed, that the sameness of a living organism does not depend upon the numerical sameness of its constituent parts. As each one of us knows himself to be the same spiritual being, inhabiting the same body, from year to year, in spite of changing opinions and character, in spite of complete and repeated transformations in the material frame, so it is wisely concluded, that the resurrection body may be another and yet the same.

IV. We are now prepared to inquire into the actual teachings of the New Testament in regard to the resurrection of the body.

Of the salient points of the Christian revelation touching this matter, we may mention first :

1. The universality of the resurrection. The announcement is, that all the dead that are in their graves, both the righteous and the wicked, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth. And yet it is a curious circumstance, that there are but two passages in the New Testament in which this is expressly affirmed. Our Lord declared that "*The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth : they that have done good unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.*"* Paul, likewise, in his address before Felix at Cæsarea, speaks of the "*resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust,*" as a doctrine confessed equally by Jews and Christians.† But in every other passage, in which the question is handled, it is the resurrection of the righteous only, which is brought to view. Tak-

* John v. 28-29.

† Acts xxiv. 15.

ing for granted the universality of the resurrection, taught so clearly by Daniel centuries before, and only re-affirmed under the new economy, the inspired penmen evidently prefer to dwell upon the glorious vision of the resurrection of the righteous. It was with them a topic not of warning, but of consolation. Christ would indeed appear to raise and to judge the race, but he would come especially to raise and reward his Church. So it stands in Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians. Only the dead in Christ are seen starting from their graves, to be joined straightway by the living host of the redeemed, changed in the twinkling of an eye, and all caught up together to meet their Lord in the air. So too in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. The only resurrection here discussed, is the resurrection of the righteous. The epistle is addressed only to believers, and is concerned only with them. The dead are all, indeed, to be raised; but it is only "the dead in Christ," who now occupy the thoughts of the Apostle. When, accordingly, he says: "*As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,*" we are required by the context to limit the

application of this announcement to the elect. Not that the wicked will fail of rising, because they are not in Christ; for the wicked do not come now at all into the account. They are ignored. It is only the elect who are named, or thought of; and these having died in Adam, all of them, shall all of them in Christ be made alive.

2. This general resurrection is to take place at the end of the world.

Nearly all through the Christian centuries there has existed an opinion, gaining at times a wide prevalence, that there is to be a pre-millennial resurrection of the righteous, who shall reign with Christ for a thousand years, while the rest of the dead still slumber on in their graves. In support of this opinion, appeal is made to the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse. But a closer inspection of the chapter might have disclosed the fact, that the resurrection here spoken of as preceding the thousand years, is a resurrection, not of all the saints, but only of the martyred saints. It would be disingenuous to deny, or try to blink, the difficulties which beset not this passage alone, but the entire book of the Apocalypse. Till the Cham-

pollion appears, who shall decipher this mysterious hieroglyph, we can do no better than interpret the passage in question figuratively. Perhaps the meaning of it is, that before the Millennium is ushered in—that mellow Indian summer of the Church on earth,—the spirit of the martyrs must be reproduced throughout the ranks of the redeemed. The martyrs may thus be said to issue from their graves in advance of the general resurrection, to sit regnant with Christ. But whatever may be done with this passage, it will not answer for us to disregard the many other passages which speak of only one resurrection at the end of the world. The New Testament holds up clearly before us one great day, for which all other days are made; the day of final judgment, the day of God, when the Son of Man shall be seen coming in the clouds with the retinue of all his disembodied saints, when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and all the dead shall live again embodied, in order to the completeness of their being and the fulness of their retribution.

3. A third marked feature of the New Testa-

ment teachings on this subject, is the great prominence which is given to this day of resurrection and final judgment, as compared with the day of death. That retribution immediately follows the departure of the soul out of the body, is clearly a doctrine of the New Testament. Even De Wette finds this doctrine in the parable of Dives and Lazarus; as also in what St. Paul says of desiring to depart that he may be with Christ. Others find it taught also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we read: "*It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.*"* At death, then, probation ceases, and retribution begins; a retribution, whose lines run on without a break or a bend. And yet the retribution must needs be incomplete. The disembodied soul is not the whole man. In order to perfect fulness of retribution, our complex humanity must be reconstructed. The soul must be reëmbodied in order to encounter the completeness of its doom. Whatever there may be of Heaven for the dying saint, or of Hell for the dying sinner, the day of final reckoning will open, and will shut, gates of glory and of gloom, through which only the

* Hebrews ix. 27.

reëmbodied can pass to the consummation of their weal or woe. It is this final goal of history, towards which the finger of prophecy in the New Testament ever steadily points. Paul, John, Peter, and our Lord himself, are all agreed in this, that the great day for every single member of the human race, as for the race as a whole, is that solemn day when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise. It is then that the wicked are to "*go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.*"* Then will the sentence be pronounced: "*He which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still.*"† What relation there may be between this general judgment, which comes at the end of the world, and that particular judgment, which immediately follows death, it is not for us to say, inasmuch as it has not been revealed to us in the Scriptures. On either hand there is an error to be shunned; on the one hand, the error, into which many have fallen, of supposing a continued probation after death, and on the other hand, the error of not emphasizing

* Matth. xxv. 46.

† Rev. xxii. 11.

as we should the resurrection and the final judgment.

4. The spiritual nature of the resurrection body, is also distinctly taught.

When we sit down to a careful study of the New Testament, we may well be astonished at the crude notions which have, in so many quarters, been entertained in regard to the resurrection body. The resurrection of the flesh is nowhere affirmed. In cases where the noun is used, the resurrection revealed, is the resurrection "of the dead," or "from the dead," or "of the righteous," or sometimes simply "the resurrection;" never is it the resurrection of the flesh, never even, in so many words, the resurrection of the body. In other cases where a verb is used, the body is spoken of as dying and rising again; but in no single passage is there any hint of a resurrection of the flesh. Nay, we are told expressly, that "*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*"* According to Paul's own statement of the matter, as the seed we plant in the ground, is not the grain we reap, so the body that is buried, is not the body that will be raised. It will be the same by no nu-

merical sameness of the constituent parts, but only by the indissoluble tie of an organic life. The same will it be, and yet another, by all the difference there is between corruption and incorruption, between weakness and strength, between shame and glory. The new body, we are told, will be a *spiritual* body; not spirit surely, for that would be a contradiction in terms, but strictly and properly a body, and of course, material, although the matter, of which it is composed, will be highly refined and ethereal. Hence there will be no need, as now, of food, or of sleep; no society of wife or child; no night; no tears; no weariness; but a lofty angelic brotherhood, in radiant beauty as of solar light, with immortal youth, and a buoyancy abundantly equal to an eternal round of thought, of feeling, and of action. Farther than this we cannot go. An inspired pen has drawn across our path the line, beyond which it is not permitted us to set our feet. "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*"* Another Apostle has told us, that the new body will

* 1 John iii. 2.

be resplendent, fashioned like unto Christ's "*glorious body*."* Of the resurrection bodies of the lost, which the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages undertook so boldly to describe, not a syllable is dropped, disclosing their aspect, or gauging their agonies.

As to the place of our ultimate abode, when reëmbodied for our eternal career, it may be, as Chalmers and many other recent writers have fancied, interpreting literally the third chapter of the second Epistle of Peter, this very globe, on which we now dwell, renewed and glorified. The impossibility of this has certainly not been demonstrated, and can not be. It may be that Martin Luther was right in saying, that "nature, groaning because of sin, has on now her work-day dress, but on the morning of the resurrection, she will put on God's Easter robe." This all may be; but the language of Scripture can hardly be deemed explicit enough, to fasten such a conception upon us as an established article of faith. Nor do we require so sharply defined a theory of the future life. Let it suffice for us to know, that somewhere in our Father's universe we shall have a place of abode as well

* Phil. iii. 21.

suitcd to our spiritual bodies, as the globe we now inhabit is suited to these "vile bodies" of flesh and blood.

Such, my brethren, are the prerogatives and splendors in store for us: immediately beyond the grave, a disembodied life of holiness and bliss, in the presence of our Lord; and on the morning of the resurrection, a reëmbodied life in the New Jerusalem. And may this crowning vision of glory never fail us under any burden of sorrow, in any weariness of labor, in any sharpness of conflict. Let us keep clean the feet, which aspire to the golden streets; and keep clean the hands, which would grasp the palm-branches of that final triumph. And if there be a man within the reach of my voice to-night, enslaved to any defiling pleasure, or bent upon any selfish errand in the world, let the fear of missing these great glories that are offered us, haunt him by day and by night, till he has made his peace with God.



Eternal Life, the Gift of God,
through Jesus Christ.

BY

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XI.

"——the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. vi. 23.

IN considering the subject of Eternal Life, assigned to me in this course, I am led almost necessarily to the inquiries whether it is to be attained by all men? and if not, what are the conditions of its attainment? All other questions connected with this subject are insignificant when compared with these. I shall not attempt to evade the duty thus imposed upon me, but shall endeavor, by God's blessing, to examine the claims which the doctrine of Universal Salvation has to be received as true.

There is a very wide difference among those who hold the doctrine of Universal Salvation. Some maintain that there is no punishment after this life,—but that death ushers all men, at once, into a state of blessedness;—others, that there is a state of future punishment, limited in

duration, which will subserve the purpose for which it exists, and then cease; and others still, that in some way, they know not how, and at some future time, they know not when, there will be a Universal Restoration, and all evil and sorrow be brought to an end. Some hold that this will result in the natural course of things, and that there is no supernatural plan of Redemption;—others, that there is a system of recovery from the evils under which we suffer, by supernatural means, and that Universal Salvation is purchased by the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

Some of these opinions, rejecting as they do all the features of the Gospel of Christ, are to be regarded only with horror. But there are others connected with high views of God's grace, and of the sufficiency of Christ's redeeming work, which are entitled to respectful consideration.

In this discourse I shall consider those views of the doctrine of Universal Salvation, which recognize a revealed system of Redemption, and attribute the final happiness of all to the work of Christ. I trust that all I say,

may be said in the spirit of charity, and only in the interest of truth.

It may be well, in the first place, to refer briefly to the origin and history of the doctrine of Universal Salvation. Towards the close of the second century the influences of Neo-Platonism begin to be apparent in Christian theology. Plato's theory of punishment as remedial, (although, in the case of the irreclaimable, he regarded it as eternal,) led his disciples of the Alexandrine school to teach the limited duration of future punishment, and the final restoration of all men. In Clement of Alexandria, just at the close of the second century, we find the first development of these ideas. A passage in the second Book of the Sibylline Oracles, apparently sanctioning the idea of a final restoration, is claimed by some Universalists as of an earlier date than Clement of Alexandria, but the best critics assign it to the beginning of the third century. Clement was followed by Origen, who was the most learned and powerful advocate of this doctrine in the early Church. He was followed by Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and by many, during the fourth century, in the Latin Church. This view, however, met

with the most decided opposition from Gregory of Nazianzum, Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome and Augustine. The doctrine of Origen and his followers, on this subject, was finally condemned by the fourth council of Carthage, A. D. 398. Notwithstanding its condemnation by the Church it re-appeared from time to time. In the ninth century we find it advocated by Scotus Erigena, and in the twelfth by the Abbot Raynaldus. It was one of the tenets of the Anabaptists in the sixteenth century, and is now held in its various forms by large numbers in every part of the Christian world.

I feel confident in the assertion, that there is no trace of the doctrine of Universal Salvation earlier than Clement of Alexandria, at the very close of the second century, and that it had its origin in the influence of Neo-Platonism. The Christian writers, earlier than this, represent Eternal Life as a gift of God, in and through Christ, and as attained only by faith. They also represent the loss of this life by the impenitent as eternal. In the second epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians there is the most decided evidence, that he did not hold the doctrine of Universal Salvation. "For" he says,

“if we do the will of Christ, we shall find rest; but if not, nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment.”* Polycarp, in his epistle to the Philippians, speaking of our Lord says, “Whom, *if we please in this present world*, we shall also be made partakers of that which is to come,”† and in another place: “Now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ grant unto you a lot and portion among his saints and us with you, and to all that are under the heavens, *who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ*.”‡ Ignatius, in his epistle to the Ephesians, says: “He that is thus defiled, shall depart into unquenchable fire.”§ “For let us either fear the wrath that is to come, or let us love the grace that we at present enjoy, that by the one or the other we may be found in Christ Jesus unto true life.”¶

* Ποιούντες γὰρ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εὐρήσομεν ἀνάπαυσιν· εἰ δὲ μὴγε, οὐδὲν ἡμῶς ῥύσεται ἐκ τῆς αἰωνίου κολάσεως. S. Clem. Epist. ii. vi.

† . . . ὃ ἐὰν εὐαρεστήσωμεν ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι, ἀποληψόμεθα καὶ τὸν μέλλοντα. S. Polyc. Epis. ad Phil. v.

‡ Deus autem et Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi . . . det vobis sortem et partem inter sanctos suos; et nobis vobiscum, et omnibus qui sunt sub cœlo, qui credituri sunt in Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum. Ib. xii.

§ Ὁ τοιοῦτος, ῥυπαρὸς γενόμενος, εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον χωρήσει. S. Ignat. ad Eph. xvi.

¶ Ἡ γὰρ τὴν μέλλουσιν ὀργὴν φοβηθῶμεν, ἢ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν χάριν ἀγαπήσωμεν· ἐν τῶν δύο μόνον ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εὐρεθῆναι, εἰς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ζῆν. Ib. xi.

The principal Apostolical Fathers are Clement of Rome, Polycarp, and Ignatius. From each of these Fathers I have quoted. Whatever may be thought of their authority, this much is hereby established, that the testimony from the age succeeding the Apostles is unmistakably opposed to the doctrine of Universal Salvation.

With this brief allusion to the history of the doctrine under consideration, we come to the great question in regard to this subject, to which all others are merely incidental,—whether the doctrine of UNIVERSAL SALVATION has any foundation in the Holy Scriptures.

If there is anything which lies on the very surface, and pervades all the minutest parts of the Bible, it is a system of recovery, or redemption from a terrible doom resting upon mankind. The Bible takes man as it finds him,—lost and ready to perish—and makes known to him a way of deliverance. These facts are evidently so comprehensive as to embrace the whole being and destiny of man. The successive portions of the Bible mark successive stages of spiritual education and growth. The foundation of all is laid in the fact of the Fall, and in the promise

of Redemption. Whatever was involved in the consequences of the Fall, whatever would have been the result, if there had been no Redemption, or will now be the result, if the Redemption is not accepted, it is certain that the end of the Redemption, as set forth in the Scriptures, is **ETERNAL LIFE**. In the Old Testament the method of educating man up to this idea is one adapted to a period of feeble spiritual apprehension. It is almost exclusively through finite forms and relations, that the glorious end to be accomplished by the promised deliverance is presented. Notwithstanding this, however, they are very far in the wrong who hold that there are no intimations of a future life of rewards or punishments in the Old Testament. The declarations of God to his people, the inspired utterances of the prophets, constantly pass over and beyond all finite facts and relations, and find their full significance only in the infinite and eternal. It seems to have been necessary before the full revelation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, to have a dispensation of Law, to impress upon men the nature and authority of the Divine government. The penal consequences of sin were taught by every variety of literal and symbolical

instruction. And the promises of deliverance, upon certain conditions, mercifully accompanied these declarations of the Law, and were woven like golden threads through the whole Dispensation. Life and Death were set forth as the sanctions of the Divine Law. And it is scarcely possible to suppose that these were understood to involve merely temporal Life and Death, since neither the promises of the one, nor the threats of the other were, in that case, either fulfilled or inflicted.

The terms used in the New Testament, to express this end to be secured by the Redemption, are such as these, "life," "eternal life," "immortality," "an eternal weight of glory," "salvation," "eternal salvation." We find also other terms, to which these are placed in opposition or contrast, "everlasting destruction," "the wrath to come," "everlasting punishment," "the second death," "blackness of darkness," "everlasting fire," "everlasting damnation." These terms thus placed in opposition and contrast, are mutually illustrative, and each, in its connection, helps us to ascertain the meaning of the others.

It is not absolutely necessary in the argument

which I am now pursuing, to consider the meaning of the terms used in the Scriptures which, in our translation, carry with them the idea of eternity. The point which I am now endeavoring to establish is this,—that the Life which in our translation is called eternal, whatever may be its character or duration, is not, so far as the statements of the Bible are concerned, attained by all. It will be necessary, however, when we come to consider, whether there is any limit to the period of the loss of eternal life, to have ascertained definitely the meaning of these terms. It may be as well, therefore, for us now to turn our attention to that part of the subject.

If the idea of eternity is expressed at all, in the Scriptures, it is by the Hebrew word עולם, and the Greek words *αἰών* and *αἰώνιος*. Some have endeavored to exclude not only the idea of eternity, but of duration altogether, from the word *αἰώνιος*, as applied to life, and claim that it is significant only of character or of moral and spiritual condition. They have been driven to this position in order to evade the force of the same word when applied to punishment and destruction. But if these words, which in the Hebrew and Greek are equivalent, do not carry

with them the idea of duration, then there is no certainty in any conclusion, as to the meaning of language. That they are used with reference to different *measures* of duration is evident, and results from the fundamental idea in these terms. $\alpha\iota\omega\upsilon$ and $\alpha\lambda\omega\nu$ each signify world-period,—age,—dispensation. The fundamental idea, out of which the terms have grown, is that of a succession of worlds or world-periods; the eternity before and after the world, being broken up into great periods, in each of which there is a fixed development from a definite beginning to a definite end. So in this world-period, in which we live, there are lesser periods, ages or dispensations, and to these the same terms are applied. But as one age is called $\alpha\iota\omega\upsilon$ or $\alpha\lambda\omega\nu$, so is a succession of ages or one world-period; and as one world-period is described by the same terms, so is the whole succession of world-periods, and eternity itself is the great $\alpha\iota\omega\upsilon$ or $\alpha\lambda\omega\nu$. *The extent of duration, therefore, is to be inferred from the nature of that to which the terms are applied.* Now when these terms, carrying with them the idea of duration, are applied to the Life, which is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ, is there any reason for

limiting their significance? It is a matter of surprise that some men, in their anxiety to escape the force of these words, when applied to future punishments, should limit their significance, when applied to the future life. One of the most extraordinary of these limitations, as it seems to me, is that which limits the application of the terms *αἰών* and *αἰώνιος* to the Christian dispensation. But what meaning is there, on this supposition, in such declarations of our Saviour as these: "They shall not perish during the Christian dispensation" (*εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*)?—"shall not thirst during the Christian dispensation" (*εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*)? What reasonable doubt can there be that our Saviour intended to convey the idea of unlimited duration: "He shall *never* thirst," "they shall *never* perish." The eternal life of the Scriptures will never end. Is not the *loss* of that life, to which the same term is applied and in the same connection, unending also?

This leads us to an examination of the Biblical argument in favor of the doctrine of the Universal Salvation.

In order that I may state this argument with perfect frankness, I shall refer, under the appropriate heads, to all the passages, which are

quoted in support of the doctrine of Universal Salvation, in a work* which is, perhaps, as much as any, a standard as a book of reference among Universalists.

The doctrine of Universal Salvation rests, it is alleged, on the promises of God,† and on the immutable oath of Jehovah.‡ But it must be admitted by the candid inquirer, that these promises confirmed by the immutable oath of God contemplate and are fulfilled in the final and universal triumph of the Kingdom of Christ. The same remark will apply to the argument from the testimony of the prophets as to the “restitution of all things.”§ At all events, if the Bible, as we shall presently see, expressly declares that there are those who shall fail of eternal life, these passages *must* be so interpreted and understood. An argument is derived also, from the determinate will,|| and the

* The Universalists' Book of Reference, by Rev. E. E. Guild. Boston: Jas. M. Usher, 37 Cornhill, 1859.

† Gen. iii. 15. James i. 15. James iv. 1. 1 John iii. 8. Heb. ii. 14, 15. Gen. xii. 3. Gen. xxii. 18. Gen. xxvi. 4, and xxviii. 14.

‡ Gen. xxii. 16-18. Isa. xlv. 22-24. Heb. vi. 16-19.

§ Acts iii. 20, 21. Ps. xxii. 27, and lxxxvi. 9, and lxxii. 11, 17. Isa. ii. 2, and xlix. 6, and xxv. 6-8. Jer. xxxi. 31-34. Rom. xi. 25, 26. Dan. ix. 24. Hos. xiii. 14. 1 Cor. xv.

|| 1 Tim. ii. 1-6, (expressing a “will of purpose,” Matt. viii. 3. John v. 21. John vi. 37. Rom. ix. 18. Eph. i. 9, 10, 11.)

pleasure* and the unalterable purpose† of God. It is readily admitted that the salvation of all is in accordance with the determinate will of God, in this sense that he desires, proposes, and purposes, or has made provision for the salvation of all. His pleasure is in the salvation of all. But it is certainly conceivable that this desire may be thwarted by the obstinacy of man. Beyond all question it is the will of God, in this sense, that men should not sin at all. His pleasure would be promoted if no other act of transgression were ever committed,—and yet by their sins men are constantly baffling the will, and counteracting the good pleasure of God.

It is further alleged that we have the testimony of Christ and his Apostles in behalf of this doctrine‡. Jesus declares that he came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” But certainly those who hold that some will fail of eternal life, can have no difficulty with such

* Rev. iv. 11. Eph. i. 9. 10.

† Isa. xiv. 24, 27. Isa. xlv. 9, 10, 11. Eph. i. 11.

‡ Luke xix. 10. John vi. 38, 39, 40. John v. 24, and xvii. 3. Ps. ii. 7, 8. John iii. 35, and xvi. 15. Heb. i. 2. Matt. xxviii. 18. John xvii. 2, and vi. 37, and xii. 32. Luke xx. 35, 36. Acts xxiv. 15. 1 Cor. xv. 22. Matt. xxii. 30. Mark xii. 25. Acts x. 10-15, and xi. 5-10. 1 John iv. 14. John iv. 42. 1 John ii. 2, and v. 11, and iii. 8. Rev. v. 13, and xv. 4, and xxi. 4.

passages as these which announce the object for which Christ came. He did come with the object and for the purpose of saving, if possible, all the lost. It is the teaching of Christ and his Apostles, that all shall be raised from the dead, but it is not their teaching that all who are raised shall be holy and happy. Indeed the very opposite of this, as we shall presently see, is expressly declared.

Special attention is given in this work to the alleged testimony of St. Paul. He is said to teach that the salvation of the Gospel is a free gift;* that the free gift is as extensive as the judgment to condemnation;† that just as far as sin and disobedience extended, just so far shall righteousness and obedience;‡ that grace shall abound over sin, and all shall end in eternal life.§ But certainly a gift, however free, may be refused. All too that is claimed in reference to the co-extensiveness, of the free gift and the judgment to condemnation, and of the superabounding of grace over sin may be admitted without admitting the doctrine of universal salvation. How extensive is the

* Eph. ii. 8, 9. 2 Tim. i. 9.

† Rom. v. 19.

‡ Rom. v. 18, and vi. 23.

§ Rom. v. 20, 21.

judgment? It is universal, and so also is the offer of the free gift. The condemnation is followed by the eternal death only of a part of the race, and so the offer of the free gift results in the eternal life of a part only. The Apostle himself tells us in what sense grace superabounds over sin, "for the judgment was by *one* (offence) to condemnation, but the free gift is of *many* offences unto justification."

St. Paul teaches, it is alleged, the final participation of the creation in the liberty of the children of God.* But if the material world in the progress of redemption is finally renovated, and becomes a home of the redeemed, why would not the statement of the Apostle be fully justified although all men did not attain eternal life? The time will come when all the Jews and Gentiles, then living on the earth, shall be in the Kingdom of Christ†. But that fact, while it vindicates the assertion of St. Paul, does not secure the salvation of all who have lived up to that time. Christ is Lord both of the dead and the living,‡ and yet all may not be saved. Christ died as a ransom for

* Rom. viii. 20, 21.

† Rom. xi. 25-32.

‡ Rom. xiv. 7-9.

all,* and yet, if man is a free moral agent, he may refuse to avail himself of the ransom which has been paid. God loves his creatures in their trespasses and sins,† and so he purposed their redemption, but if man is free, why may he not thwart even the loving purposes of God?

St. Paul taught, it is said, the limitation and remedial design of God's chastisements,‡ but it is only in reference to the children of God in Jesus Christ. He taught, moreover, that the grace of God brought salvation to all men.§ So it has, and we have only to accept of it, and it is ours. He is claimed to have taught that there is a moral power in goodness to overcome *all* evil.|| He taught no such thing, else why does any evil exist at all? He teaches that God is the Saviour of all men.¶ And so he is, for he has provided salvation for all, but salvation is attained only by faith, and so he is in a special sense, as the Apostle says, the Saviour of those who believe. He teaches the final destruction of all enemies to God and

* 1 Tim. ii. 6. Heb. ii. 9. 1 Tim. i. 15. 2 Cor. v. 14. Rom. v. 6-8.

† Eph. ii. 4, 5. Rom. viii. 38, 39.

‡ Heb. xii. 5-11.

§ Titus ii. 11.

¶ Rom. xii. 21.

¶ 1 Tim. iv. 10.

man.* But what if the wicked who are enemies to God and man should share in this destruction! All things, he declares, shall be gathered into Christ,† acknowledge him,‡ and be reconciled to God.§ And so they shall, when the Kingdom of Christ universally prevails. It is claimed that St. Paul declares that all who have experienced natural and moral death, shall experience immortal and spiritual life.|| But the passages quoted certainly contain no such declaration. All who have borne the image of the earthy, it is claimed, shall bear the image of the heavenly.¶ Yes, all of whom the Apostle is speaking, those who are “in Christ.” It is claimed that he taught the resurrection of all the dead from dishonor to glory.** But a careful examination of 1 Cor. xv. will show that the Apostle is there speaking of the resurrection of believers. It is claimed that he taught that all things have proceeded from God, and that to him all things shall return.†† But this proceeds upon a misconception of the expression *eis autov* translated “to him,” which does not mean “to

* 1 Cor. xv. 26. 2 Tim. i. 10. Heb. ii. 14, 15. James i. 15.
 1 Cor. xv. 55. † Eph. i. 9, 10. ‡ Phil. ii. 9–11.
 § 2 Cor. v. 19. Col. i. 19, 20. || 1 Cor. xv. 22.
 ¶ 1 Cor. xv. 49. ** 1 Cor. xv. 42–44, 51–54. †† Rom. xi. 36.

him" in the sense of a movement towards an object. It is used to express the idea of purpose or aim, "*εἰς* final," implying use or benefit. The passage therefore means that all things proceed from God as their cause, that all things are sustained by Him, and that for His honor and glory all things exist. Finally it is claimed that St. Paul teaches the final subjection of all intelligent beings to Christ.* But the conditions of this subjection are manifestly fulfilled when all of Christ's enemies are put under him, and all their power of evil is at an end.

This doctrine is based upon the teachings of the Bible as to the limited duration of the anger of God.† But in all the cases to which reference is made, the allusion is to the people of God. No declaration as to the limited duration of God's anger against the finally impenitent is found in the Scriptures.

The truth of the doctrine of Universal Salvation, it is claimed, rests upon the teachings of the Bible as to the attributes of God. But if it is in accordance with the attributes of God,

* 1 Cor. xv. 24-28. Heb. ii. 8, 9.

† Ps. xxx. 5. Isa. liv. 8, and lvii. 16. Ps. ciii. 8, 9. Micah vii. 18. Ps. lxxxix. 30-32. Lam. iii. 31-33.

(as I hope presently to show,) that those who refuse to be saved should be lost, then no argument for the doctrine of Universal Salvation can be derived from the fatherhood,* the goodness,† the wisdom,‡ the holiness,§ the justice,|| the mercy,¶ the omnipotence,** the love,†† the impartiality,‡‡ and the unchangeableness§§ of God.

As to the representations, of the Gospel, by the inspired writers,||| as being "good news," &c., every justification for them is found in the fact that the Gospel makes known a way of deliverance, universally available, from sin and eternal death.

The character, conduct, and teachings of Jesus Christ¶¶ lead us to believe that he would do all that could be done for the salvation

* Acts xvii. 26. Rev. iv. 11. Num. xvi. 22. Heb. xii. 9. Matt. vi. 9. Mal. ii. 6. Matt. xxiii. 9. Acts xvii. 22. Eph. iv. 6.

† Ps. cxlv. 9, and cxix. 68. ‡ Ps. civ. 24. Rom. xvi. 27.

§ Lev. xix. 2. Rev. iv. 8. || Isa. xlv. 21.

¶ Ps. lxii. 12. Ps. cvii. 1. Ps. cxxxvi.

** Rev. xix. 6. †† 1 John iv. 8.

‡‡ Ps. cxlv. 9. James iii. 17. §§ Mal. iii. 6. James i. 17.

|| Luke ii. 10. Rev. xiv. 6. Acts xx. 24. Eph. vi. 15. Rom. i. 1. 1 Tim. i. 11. Eph. i. 13. Heb. viii. 6. 2 Cor. iii. 6-11.

¶¶ Mark viii. 1-9. John xi. 35. Luke vii. 12-15. Matt. xii. 10-13, and xxiii. 37-39. Luke xix. 41, and xxii. 61, 62. John xx. 24-29, and viii. 3-11. Matt. v. 44, and vi. 14-15, and xviii. 21, 22. Luke xxiii. 34.

of men. They do not satisfy us that it may not be impossible even for the mild and merciful Jesus to save those who persistently refuse to be saved.

As to the influence of the Gospel upon its recipients,* why may it not be all that is claimed, even if some in the exercise of their moral agency reject the life which it offers? And does it appear that practically the doctrine of Universal Salvation is more favorable to piety than the belief that some, through their own folly and guilt, will fail of everlasting life?

This doctrine is concluded to be true from the fact that God's law requires us to love and imitate him,† which it would be impossible for us to do, if he were not lovely, which he would not be, if all men are not saved. But what if God has done all for us that infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness could do, where is the want of loveliness upon which this argument is based?

It is claimed that what the Scriptures teach

* Rom. viii. 24. 1 Cor. i. 18. Gal. iii. 9. Rom. xv. 13. 1 Peter i. 8. John xv. 11. Heb. iv. 3. † Matt. xxii. 36-40. Eph. v. 1.

respecting faith,* hope,† and the confidence,‡ which we ought to repose in God, lead necessarily to a belief in this doctrine. Faith is said in the Bible to be the “substance of things hoped for.” But the loss of eternal life on the part of any can not, it is claimed, be an object of hope, therefore it can not be believed to be true. In answer to this it must be remembered, that the faith, of which the Apostle speaks as the “substance of things hoped for,” is faith in the Gospel, the declaration of deliverance from eternal death. It certainly does not follow from this that there are not many things which we might wish to be otherwise, but which, nevertheless, we believe to be true.

Hope is represented as “an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast.” But this it could not be, it is said,—and we should feel no confidence, if the salvation of all men, and therefore our salvation, were not certain. But the salvation of *believers* is certain, and that is the ground of the confidence which we are expected to repose in God.

* Heb. xi. 1. Gal. v. 6. † 1 John iii. 3. Heb. vi. 19.

‡ Prov. iii. 5. Ps. lxii. 8. Ps. xl. 4. Prov. xxix. 25. Isa. xxvi. 4. Ps. ix. 10. Job xiii. 15, and xxii. 21. Mat. vi. 25-34.

Finally, this doctrine is inferred from what the Scriptures teach respecting prayer.* We cannot pray, it is said, in faith for the salvation of all men, unless we believe that all will be saved. But in answer to this it may be said that we are to pray that God's will may be done, although we know that what is inconsistent with God's will, is done and will continue to be done throughout the world. When we pray for all men, the spirit of our prayer should be, that all men may accept of eternal life as it is offered in the Gospel, and this may be, and should be, a prayer of faith.

I have thus referred to all the passages adduced in proof of the propositions which have just been stated. Some references by way of answer to objections that may be made, have been omitted. It is a matter of regret to me that the space at my disposal does not allow me to quote the passages in full with the chain of argument, which links them together. I have endeavored, however, to refer briefly to all the heads of the argument, and to show either how little support they give to the doctrine of Universal Salvation, or else how little support they

* 1 Tim. ii. 1. Matt. v. 44. Rom. xiv. 23. 1 Tim. ii. 8.

derive from the Bible. We must now pass to the Biblical argument against the doctrine of Universal Salvation.

The great fundamental truth revealed in the Scriptures is this, that ETERNAL LIFE IS THE GIFT OF GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

The Old Testament is the prophecy of the great deliverance from the curse of the law by the coming Messiah. Christ himself says, that he is the bread of life, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world;* that whoso eateth his flesh, and drinketh his blood, hath eternal life;† that he is the door by which, if any man enter, he shall be saved;‡ that he is come that we might have life;§ that because he lives we shall live also;|| that he is the Resurrection and the Life.¶

The Apostles of Christ declare that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved;** that being justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him;†† that, if by one man's offence death reigned by one much more they which receive abundance of grace, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ;

* John vi. 33.

§ John x. 10.

** Acts xv. 11.

† John vi. 54.

| John xiv. 19.

†† Rom. v. 9.

‡ John x. 9.

¶ John xi. 25.

that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so should grace reign unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord;* that Christ is in us, the hope of glory;† that our life is hid with Christ;‡ that Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come;§ that God hath appointed us to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ;|| that he has become the author of eternal salvation;¶ that God hath called us to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ;** that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him;†† that this is the record that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son;‡‡ that the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. §§

Another fundamental truth revealed in the Scriptures is that WE OBTAIN ETERNAL LIFE BY FAITH IN CHRIST.

Jesus Christ says that he has given power (*marg.* right, privilege) to them that *believe* on his name to become the sons of God;|||| that the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whosoever *believeth* in him, should not perish, but

* Rom. v. 17, 21.

† Col. i. 27.

‡ Col. iii. 3, 4.

§ 1 Thess. i. 10.

|| 1 Thess. v. 9.

¶ Heb. v. 9. Eph. v. 23.

** 1 Peter v. 10.

†† 1 John iv. 9.

‡‡ 1 John v. 10-12.

§§ Rom. vi. 23.

|| John i. 12.

have everlasting life;* that he that *believeth* on him that sent him, hath everlasting life;† that whoso *believeth* on him shall never thirst;‡ that it is the will of God that every one which *believeth* on the Son, may have everlasting life;§ that whosoever *believeth* in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and that whosoever liveth, and *believeth* in him, shall never die.||

The Apostles of Christ bear the same testimony. The reply to the jailer is, *believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.¶ They declare that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that *believeth*;** that the righteousness of God is by *faith* of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that *believe*; that God hath set forth Christ Jesus to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, that he might be just and yet the justifier of him which *believeth* in Jesus;†† that to him that *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness;‡‡ that being justified by *faith* we have peace with

* John iii. 14.

† John v. 28.

‡ John vi. 35.

§ John vi. 40.

|| John xi. 25, 26.

¶ Acts xvi. 30, 31.

** Rom. i. 16.

†† Rom. iii. 21, 22, 24-26.

‡‡ Rom. iv. 5.

God;* that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that *believeth* ;† that by grace we are saved through *faith* ;‡ that we are made wise unto salvation through *faith* which is in Christ Jesus ;|| that we are kept by the power of God through *faith* unto salvation ;¶ that whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God ;** that by or through our *belief* we may know that we have eternal life.

It is impossible for language to declare more positively, explicitly, plainly, without reserve or qualification, or the possibility of reasonable misunderstanding, the truth that ETERNAL LIFE IS IN CHRIST, AND BECOMES OURS THROUGH FAITH IN HIM.

And now that question so full of awful interest comes up for consideration,—what is the testimony of the Scriptures as to the future state of those who will not receive Christ as their Saviour? While we are considering this part of the subject, I trust it will be remembered that I use only the language of the Scriptures. If therefore there is any dissent from the decla-

* Rom. v. i.

§ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

† Rom. x. 4.

| 1 Pet. i. 5.

‡ Eph. ii. 8.

¶ 1 John v. 1, 13.

rations which are made, it is dissent not from any opinion of mine, but from the doctrine of the Bible itself. If these statements, about to be adduced, are consistent with the idea of universal salvation, no advocate of that doctrine need to be disturbed. If they are inconsistent with it, I have not made them so. They are the words of God. It must appear plain from these following passages, taken in connection with those which have been already cited, that inasmuch as all men are sinners, all men, until they are delivered from their natural state, are exposed to eternal death; that this sad and fatal condition of man prompted God to provide the fullest and freest deliverance, at the greatest conceivable sacrifice; that the end attained, under this deliverance, is eternal life; that the method by which it is attained is faith in Jesus Christ, and that those WHO WILL NOT ACCEPT THIS DELIVERANCE, FAIL FINALLY AND FOREVER OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Many of the passages, which will be quoted, represent the wrath of God toward sinners. There are other passages which declare his love for sinners. Since these are both plain declarations of the Bible, they must be consistent with

each other. It will not do to ignore the wrath any more than the love. When the Bible speaks of the wrath of God, it undoubtedly speaks after the manner of men, but there must be a meaning, and a terrible meaning in it. It means at least as much as this : that God, although loving the sinner, and seeking his salvation, must, while the sinner is still rejecting the offers of salvation, exercise feelings, and pursue a course of conduct towards him, which can be fitly described only as the wrath of God. And it is worthy of special notice, that when the love of God for impenitent sinners is spoken of, it is love as prompting him to provide a way of deliverance. *There is no declaration in the whole Bible of the love of God for those by whom this deliverance is persistently and finally rejected.*

To come then to the testimony of the Scriptures as to the feelings of God, and the course which he pursues towards the impenitent and unbelieving, we find it declared that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and though his excellency mount up to the heavens, yet he shall perish forever ; that the eye of the wicked shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty ; that the wicked is re-

served to the day of destruction, they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath;* that the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment; that the way of the ungodly shall perish;† that upon the wicked God shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest;‡ that because they regard not the works of the Lord, he shall destroy them;§ that when the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they should be destroyed forever;|| that every one shall die for his own iniquity;¶ that the soul that sinneth, it shall die;** that some shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt.††

Jesus says, that as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of the world, and the Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;‡‡ that he that believeth not is con-

* Job xxi. 17-19, 30; xxvii. 13, 14; xxxi. 2, 3. † Ps. i. 4-6.

‡ Ps. xi. 5, 6. Isa. xxxiii. 14. § Ps. xxviii. 5; cxix. 155.

|| Ps. xcii. 7, 10; xlix. 17, 19. ¶ Jer. xxxi. 30.

** Ezek. xviii. 4. †† Dan. xii. 2.

‡‡ Matt. xiii. 41, 42, 49, 50. Mark ix. 45, 46.

demned already ; that he shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him ;* that the Son of Man shall say to those on the left hand,—Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels ; that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.†

The Apostles of Christ declare that the wicked treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God ; that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, are denounced upon every soul of man that doeth evil ;‡ that destruction and misery are in their ways ;§ that if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall be Anathema Maranatha ;|| that if their Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost ;¶ that many walk whose end is destruction ;** that the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the

* John iii. 18, 36.

† Matt. xxv. 41, 46.

‡ Rom. ii. 5, 8, 9

§ Rom. iii. 16.

|| 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

¶ 2 Cor. iv. 3,

** Phil. iii. 19.

glory of his power;* that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;† that the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished;‡ that there is a day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men;§ that whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire;|| that the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.¶

These are the words of God, and I solemnly put it to the reason and common sense of every man whether, with these terrific declarations before us, it is possible for us to believe, and that too without any doubt or misgiving, that God intended to teach us in his revelation that all men will finally be saved.

I know that it is possible to attempt to explain away all these declarations; to say that these threatened punishments are all inflicted in this life, or in a limited period after death; that everlasting and eternal are used in limited signi-

* 2 Thessa. i. 7-9. Heb. x. 26, 27.

† Heb. x. 31.

‡ 2 Pet. ii. 9.

§ Jude xv.

| Rev. xx. 15.

¶ Rev. xxi. 8.

fiction as to the future,* or apply only, in this connection, to an age or dispensation, and that there is no death but the death of the body; or if there is a second death, that it is not death without end. According to the view which I am advocating there is no difficulty with the statements which are made in the Scriptures as to the love and mercy of God and his gracious purposes towards mankind. When we find passages speaking of the love of God for the sinner, we see their justification in the full and free deliverance in his own Son for the sinner which God has provided. When we find passages speaking of the glory of the children of the resurrection, and that all of them shall rise to immortal life and honor, we understand their meaning: for we remember that there are two resurrections, the one of the just, and the other of the unjust, and that blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. When we find passages speak-

* We have already seen that the terms in the Bible translated "eternal" and "everlasting" signify different measures of duration, and that the degree of duration is to be determined by the nature of the subject. Now the life which Christ bestows must be admitted to be everlasting in the fullest sense of that word. But it is evident from the Scriptures that there is such a thing as the loss of this eternal life. Even if it were possible therefore to fix upon the term "everlasting" a limited signification as applied to future punishment, still the loss of eternal life must be an eternal loss.

ing of the time when all men throughout the world shall believe in Christ, and when at last there shall be a restitution of all things, we readily understand their reference to the final triumph of the Kingdom of Christ in its millennial glory, and the subjection of all his enemies under his feet. But those passages which are descriptive of God's dealings with the wicked, present insurmountable difficulties to the doctrine of Universal Salvation. And not only those passages, but the whole teaching of the Bible. If those who do not accept Christ as their Saviour, in this life, will finally be saved, it must be either with or without Christ. But the Bible knows of no salvation except through Christ. If this salvation is then through him, it must be either with or without faith in him. The Bible knows of no salvation except through faith in Christ. But if this salvation is supposed to be through faith in Christ, exercised after death, then there must be a state of probation after this life. But the Bible knows of no state of probation but the one this side of the grave. If then, according to the Bible, there is no salvation but in Christ; if there is no salvation except as attained by faith in Christ; and if

there is no state of probation after this, in which we can exercise this faith, having failed to exercise it before, then these declarations of the Scriptures, which have just been quoted, stand unimpaired in their full force, and plainly declare that *there is such a thing as the loss of eternal life on the part of those who do not believe, and that this loss is as eternal as the life itself.*

The advocates of the doctrine of Universal Salvation endeavor to escape the crushing force of the Biblical argument by claiming that we are compelled to some different interpretation of these passages from that which they naturally bear, and that in no other way can we vindicate the character and government of God.

I admit that the teachings of the Bible cannot be in violation of that moral nature which God has given us, and that the testimony of our moral constitution should be consulted in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Every satisfactory system of Theology must be a Theodicy or vindication of the character and government of God: God himself appeals to our sense of justice to testify that he is just in his dealings with men. If therefore it can be clearly shown that the doctrine of Universal Salvation fur-

nishes a complete Theodicy, and that the failure of any to secure eternal life, would be absolutely inconsistent with what we know to be the attributes of God, then I admit that the view which I have advocated must be abandoned. But I cannot see in that case what claims the Bible would have to be an intelligible revelation of God, or indeed any revelation at all.

It is necessary, therefore, to meet this point and to show that the doctrine of Universal Salvation does not furnish any superior advantages for the vindication of the government of God, and that the failure of some to attain eternal life, is consistent with what we know to be the character and attributes of God.

Let us see if the doctrine of Universal Salvation clears up the difficulties which surround the divine administration, or has any advantage over other views in that respect.

It would seem to be necessary that this doctrine should be based upon the supposed power of God, at his own pleasure, to turn the hearts of all to himself, and to make them by the simple exercise of his will holy and happy forever. On any other supposition it is difficult to conceive what assurance there can be that all will

be finally saved. Now admitting that God has this power, can the advocate of Universal Salvation give any good reason why he does not exercise it *now*, and why he punishes men when by the simple exercise of his will he might make them holy and happy. If God has not this power, there is no assurance that all will finally be saved. If he has this power, then the Universalist is bound to show why he does not exercise it now, why any evil is permitted to exist at all, or to abandon the claim that his scheme furnishes the only vindication of the character of God. For manifestly it is not the only difficulty in the case that evil should exist *eternally*, it is a difficulty of precisely the same kind that it should exist *now*, and the Universalist has no advantages which others do not possess for solving that difficulty. The great mystery confronts him as it does all, how God can be all-powerful, and yet not able to prevent the existence of evil, or being able, why he does not prevent it *always, everywhere, now, and here*.

I suppose it may be said by the advocates of this doctrine that there may be certain difficulties now, which render the infliction of punishment at present necessary. But if there is such

a limitation of the divine power, or such an expediency in the view of divine wisdom, how can it be proved that such a limitation or expediency may not always continue to exist? It will not do in this connection to refer to any supposed promises of God as a reason for supposing that this present necessity will finally cease, for the very question which we are discussing is whether there are any such promises, and the argument of the Universalist in behalf of the existence of such promises from the attributes of God is now under consideration. To reason from the attributes to the promises and then from the promises to the attributes would be but reasoning in a circle, with no progress towards a conclusion.

This difficulty of the *present* existence of evil, in the way of a vindication of the character of God is just as much a difficulty for the Universalist as for anybody else, except upon one supposition, which now demands our attention, and that is, that all suffering is remedial, and that no one is required to bear any more than is absolutely necessary for and productive of his good. But let us see how this theory will bear examination. Is it, in the first place, in accordance with facts? We certainly see an immense

amount of suffering which, instead of being any benefit to the sufferer, is clearly the reverse, and is accompanied by a process of moral decline. So far as we can see or believe, there is suffering therefore, which does not result, however it may have been designed, in moral or spiritual good. Neither does it, in these cases, have at all the appearance of a process to be continued after death, and carried on until a final result of good is reached. Such an assumption is entirely gratuitous, and in the face of all the indications perceived by us, all of which point the other way. But there is another difficulty, which is fatal to this view as held by those who believe in the mediation of Jesus Christ, and that is that this view necessarily dispenses with the work of Christ. For if the character of God demands that no suffering shall be borne, or punishment inflicted which does not actually result in, and is absolutely necessary for our good,—then from what does Christ deliver us, and how is he our Redeemer? All the punishment that he saves us from, is so much subtracted from the sum of our good, and is an injury instead of a blessing. If Christ has accomplished some great deliverance for us, then our state without him

would have been very different from what it is now. What then would have been that state, and what is it precisely, from which Christ has delivered us? If this theory is true, it is from no punishment, no penalty, from nothing which is not for our good.

To say that he saves us from the misery necessarily attendant upon sin by saving us from sin itself, does not help the difficulty. For supposing Christ had not undertaken our deliverance, man would either have been saved without Christ, or else have always continued to sin, and so always continued to suffer. But if he would always have continued to suffer, then eternal suffering for sin is consistent with the justice of God, for Christ has delivered us from no suffering which it would not have been just in God to have inflicted, or to have permitted to exist.

The Universalist Theodicy must therefore admit that punishment is inflicted by God, as a vindication of his law, and not as necessarily conducive to the good of the sufferer, or else it must maintain that there is no suffering which is not absolutely necessary in its character and degree to the sufferer's good. In the first case, if the attributes of God permit this at all, no

reason can be given why it might not be permitted forever. In the second case, as we have seen, the view either dispenses with the work of Christ, or else admits that the eternal punishment of the sinner would be just.

When the Universalist claims that the doctrine of Eternal Salvation must be true, because it alone vindicates the character of God, he must not only show that it does actually vindicate the character of God, but that other Theodicies, rejecting this doctrine, do not. And it will not do for him to select any particular one, which in his view may be most defective, he must take them each and all, and show that each and all are fatally defective, either in being inconsistent with facts, or in presenting insurmountable objections as to the attributes of God.

It is necessary, therefore, for the advocate of the doctrine of Universal Salvation, to prove that having given men the opportunity to be saved, and having offered them salvation as a free gift, upon their rejection of the gift, it would be unjust in God to leave them to the consequences of their sins.

Nor is this all, it must be proved that it is possible for God to save the sinner without his

consent, or necessarily to secure that consent without interference with the sinner's moral agency, and that it involves no contradiction to suppose that God can create moral beings, and yet absolutely secure the rectitude of their choice, for if this cannot be proved then it may be that the sinner will eternally sin, and that it is not inconsistent with the justice of God, that the sinner, whom it is impossible to save, should eternally suffer the consequences of his sins.

But there is something more which it is necessary for the Universalist to prove, and that is that it would be unjust in God to suffer the sinner, who rejects eternal life in Christ, to cease absolutely to exist. Now, it is not by any means easy, even if it is at all possible, to prove, from the divine attributes or from philosophical considerations, that man is not naturally, now that he has fallen, exposed to the utter perishing, destruction and extinction of his being, and that the only possible way to avert this is by the acceptance of eternal life in Jesus Christ. And it would be equally difficult, if not impossible, to prove that this is at all inconsistent with the character of God.

It is also necessary for the Universalist to

prove that salvation may be attained without faith in Christ, or else that the exercise of this faith is possible, and will be available in the other world. But how can it be shown that the joyful acceptance of Christ as our Saviour is not absolutely necessary as the moving cause of gratitude and love, and gratitude and love necessary to holiness, and holiness necessary to happiness and eternal life? And if this is admitted and still the doctrine of Universal Salvation is maintained, it must be proved that this faith can be exercised in the other world. But what new motives can be presented there more powerful than are presented here? Can any more wonderful view of divine love dawn upon the soul than that which now displays itself in the sacrifice of Christ? Will the reality of impending punishment furnish the controlling motive? But if it will be such a salutary motive then, why should the fear of punishment be denounced as so unsuitable and uninfluential a motive now? But besides all this, what gratitude and love are likely to spring up for deliverance from a punishment which it would be unjust for God to inflict? The Universalist is inevitably reduced to this dilemma, that it is either consistent or in-

consistent with the divine attributes that those who refuse eternal life, should lose it finally and forever. If it is inconsistent, then man is saved because he ought to be saved. He would have good reason for feeling, that so far from being grateful to God for saving him, God would be untrue to himself in suffering him to perish. Or if on the other hand it is consistent with the divine attributes, what becomes of the argument from those attributes to prove that it is impossible, and that therefore all men will be saved?

It is not necessary in this argument, in order to a vindication of the character of God, that we should account for the existence of evil. That is a fact as much for the Universalist as for us. As it exists it *must* be consistent with the infinite justice and goodness of God. Taking man then in his fallen and sinful condition, has God done everything that power and wisdom and love could do to deliver the sinner, and give him everlasting life? We claim that He has. The remedy is infinite in its method, and finite only, as it must necessarily be, in its application. It finds man a free moral agent. It offers him eternal life in Christ, as a free gift. It presents the highest motives which can possibly

be presented to the mind. The liberty of rejection is inherent in the moral freedom of man. How can he have higher motives to the acceptance of life than he has now? How can he reject it, and yet secure it? And rejecting, and continuing to reject it, what imputation can be cast upon the character of that God who gave him his only Son for his salvation, if he is lost?

I have thus endeavored to examine the claim, that all men, whether they accept of eternal life in Christ or not, will finally be saved. It has been my object to show that this claim has no scriptural foundation, inasmuch as the Scriptures teach :

I. That Eternal Life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ.

II. That we obtain Eternal Life by faith in Jesus Christ.

III. That those who will not accept of this deliverance, fail finally and forever of Eternal Life.

I have also endeavored to show that it is impossible to invalidate this scriptural argument by any considerations derived from the character and government of God.

“Finally, if any man, after a careful perusal of what has been, or may be offered, on both sides of this important question, shall be in doubt on which side the truth lies, it would certainly be most prudent and safe for him to act as he would, if he fully believed endless punishment; it will be most prudent and safe for him to yield a cordial compliance with the gospel, in repentance, faith, and obedience. Then he will be safe on either supposition. But if he trust to the flattering doctrine, that all are finally to be saved, and in this presumption shall neglect the gospel, its invitations and requirements, and it shall finally prove that that doctrine is a mere imagination of men:—alas ! he is lost ; irrecoverably lost, while those who receive the gospel with ‘the obedience of faith,’ shall through the blood of atonement ‘have right to the tree of life, and shall enter in through the gates into the City.’”*

* Edward's Works, Vol. I. p. 261.



Relation of Doctrine to Life.

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XII.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life."—JOHN xiv. 6.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."—GAL. ii. 20.

IN discussing the *Relation of Doctrine to Life*, allow me first simply to call attention to the prominent thought so fully developed in the first sermon of this series, and to employ it largely in treating the subject before us. You will remember that Christ was presented in that discourse as the impersonation and unity of Christian Theology. He was made to stand forth, as the Scriptures represent Him, as the centre and substance of all evangelical doctrine. Not less than this is signified by His own words, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." To show the bearing of christian doctrine upon christian life, therefore, I am only to contemplate Christ in His relation to a renewed soul.

I might discuss this theme by showing that the doctrines of the Bible, apart from their concretion in Christ and their relation to Him, are

not mere theories, but facts ; not dogmatic formulas, but living, practical truths, and that they must powerfully influence the soul that embraces them, giving impulse, emphasis, direction, and peculiar tone and quality to all its activities. But this mode of treatment would require me to cite in detail, specific doctrines, and to point out their separate and aggregate influence upon christian life, which would, in the brief space allotted me, render the discussion partial, desultory, and inconclusive. If, in any form, the whole of christian doctrine as one concentrated force can be exhibited as moving the springs of christian life, and the result in its more general features be delineated, my subject will be more comprehensively and satisfactorily considered. This advantage is secured by contemplating a soul permeated in nature and inspired by the presence of a living Christ, in whom all christian doctrine, in its essence and highest expression, is so centralized as to make Him what He claims to be, the Truth. Such an indwelling is possible. Says the Apostle, "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless, I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." But Paul's experience is not anomalous. Every true

Christian lives by the indwelling life of Christ. In the believer, life must be awakened by Christ, must originate from Him, from Him must receive its supplies, and by Him, in harmony with all that is truly human, must be unfolded in forms of love, trust, and obedience, until the image of the divine is rendered complete, and the dominion of the divine is absolute.

The meaning of the term *doctrine* is exhausted in the phrase, *Christ the truth*. All the virtue and efficacy that can possibly inhere in the formal statements of christian doctrine, are found in the nature of Christ and in his relation to the believer. Formal statements are but the husks of doctrine, the pressed and strained lees of gospel wine, which have only an incidental and not a vital and essential connection with the presence and operation of truth in the soul. Truth is independent of its declaration in words. Statement may be its proper vehicle to the human intelligence, but not its mode of reaching and influencing the life and character of man. When we wish to describe certain articles of nourishment, we may consider them in the gross, or analyze their properties, but when we receive them into the system, we are careful for nothing

but the form which adapts them to the purpose of sustenance. So when we receive christian truth for our spiritual growth, we want it in Christ, the only form in which God has prepared it for the soul.

The term *Life*, as applied to the Christian, I use in a broad and intensive sense. In its full play, it is a spiritual wakefulness, a kindled susceptibility, a ceaseless, appropriative and assimilative energy, and a high and vigorous movement of the soul toward the divine. It is not vigor, nor earnestness, nor resolution, nor duty, nor spirit alone. While it includes all these, it sublimely rises above them all. It is something higher. It is the upward rising of the soul to God through the indwelling power of Christ as the absolute Truth and Life. We find its proofs not only in conscious communion with God, but in a restless activity in His service. All intense christian thinking about God or man; all intense christian feeling toward God or man; all intense christian working for God or man, are the manifestation and evidence of christian life. Christ living in the hearts of His people is the source and guaranty of their life, a proposition which seems to gather into itself the meaning of

my texts, and which in its unfolding must show the relation of doctrine to life.

But does Christ in any essential sense live in a converted soul? The Bible declares that He does. "Christ liveth in me." "Christ in you, the hope of glory." "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." This inspired language is consciously appropriated by every real disciple of Jesus. It expresses the ordinary and only mode of Christian life. It is an amazing and blessed fact that Jesus, in all the fulness of truth, and in all the fulness of His life, dwells in our souls by faith. This indwelling of Christ is not imaginary, but real; not a fancy, but a conviction; not a shadow, but a substance. Though man by sin is emptied of God, yet has he not lost his capacity for God. His moral nature and its needs remain with him. And these constitute a capacity and a demand for the divine presence. When this presence is realized by a union with Christ, every power of his nature may be energized, inspired, and filled with God. The soul is thus open to the possession and working of God within it, without any compromise of its personality. As light pervades and illumines the

atmosphere, as magnetism charges and fills the particles of steel, freely and powerfully, without change of elemental condition, so does the Divine Being pervade human nature, raising the soul to higher planes of thought, feeling, and action. As in the fall man lost this personal indwelling of God from his spiritual nature, so in his restoration through faith in Christ and conformity to God's requirements, he receives Him into his soul again, and henceforth lives a life whose impulse, purpose, and movement, are of divine inspiration. It is the peculiar office of Jesus, as the Truth and the Life, to abide with His people. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." "Christ liveth in me." When we speak of Christ living in His people and abiding with them, we mean as veritable a Christ as was with His disciples in the days of His flesh. Who can doubt that the same Jesus who was with Peter, James and John, and in them in spiritual illumination at the scene of His transfiguration, was with Peter at Pentecost, with Paul at Athens, with John in Patmos. This same Jesus was with Baxter at Kidderminster, with Edwards at Northampton, with Carey at Serampore. This same Jesus

is now with every faithful minister of His Gospel, and will be unto the end of the world. He lives in all His people. We believe the Holy Spirit is in the church and in the ministry, as the Comforter, the Enforcer, and the Sanctifier, but not in either in such expulsive force as to displace a living, abiding Christ. There was no understanding between the persons of the Godhead whereby the second and third should exchange places. The Spirit was essentially on earth before His marvellous display at Pentecost, and Christ has dwelt essentially on earth since His ascent from Olivet. Since the effusion of the Spirit in fulfilment of prophecy, the proofs of His presence have been more manifest, and since His ascension, Christ has not been visible to the natural eye, but He has been as really in the hearts of His people as when here in the flesh. We must not by any speculative theory or partial dogmatism, substitute the pervading presence of the Spirit for the real, substantive presence of the Redeemer, and thus dislodge Christ from the soul as the Truth and the Life.

The Christian is a moral triangle. One side is toward God, one side is toward man, and one

side is toward the work which must be done for both. Or if this figure be too mechanical, the soul, to be vital in every respect, must be knit into the living forces with which it is connected, and by whose power it is attracted. It must be brought into union with God, men, and duty. The spiritual, the humanitarian, and the practical must inhere in a completely living Christian. Communion with God, sympathy with man, and work for both, are indispensable to his thorough vitalization. These conditions are all met in Christ. His Divinity, His Humanity, His Life, satisfy this threefold demand, and work out this result.

Christ in the soul, as the embodiment of truth, absorbing in Himself our obligations to God, and filling within us, by His presence and agency, the entire sphere of the supernatural, gives Spiritual Life.

Christ in the soul, as the embodiment of truth, and by His union with the race in the highest form of humanity, determines and enforces our obligations to man, and thus becomes the source, example and authority of Humanitarian Life.

Christ in the soul, as the embodiment of truth, defining our obligations and directing our

powers to work for the glory of God and for the good of man, gives Practical Life.

In further remarking upon this subject, I propose to limit myself to the points set forth in this analysis.

I. This indwelling of Christ in the Christian, as a Divine Being, embodying the truth, which reveals God to the soul in His spiritual character and in His sovereign claim to our highest worship, is the source and guaranty of our Spiritual Life.

Spiritual life, or piety, is the outflowing of the soul to God in reverence, trust, and love. It is the coming together of God and the soul in fellowship. But God condescends to join us only in His incarnation in Christ. Our communion with the divine nature is by a life of faith in the Son of God. Christ in the soul, as the hope of glory, secures our union with God, and gives birth and permanence to our spiritual or Godward life. By this immanence of Christ in a human soul, the divine element in His complex person, quickens, calls forth, and fully and sweetly employs our capacity for God. This divine inhabitation and movement in man, rouse and lift into living effort all his powers capable

of apprehending God. Before, he was earth-bound; now, he is exalted into vital fellowship with God. Thus touched by Divinity incarnated in Jesus, the God-side of the soul, though blasted and shrivelled and insensate by sin, is changed by this mysterious agency, and leaps from its withered folds into spiritual fulness, pulsates with the currents of a divine life, takes on the blushing hues of a divine beauty, and mirrors from its clarified depths the image of the divine character. How amazing the transformation wrought by the power of faith in a human soul! Faith opens the heart to the incoming of God. The soul, smitten by an almighty energy, is surprised into life; and every latent power, every dead sensibility, every blasted and decaying fibre of its spiritual being, is made to leap up and live unto God! But let us not have an erroneous conception of this faith. Faith is not an electric link or chain coupling us to Christ, who acts as a spiritual battery in the distance. This might be an expressive figure if it told the truth. But such a metaphor falsely presents our union with Christ by faith. Rather by faith, if we may employ the metaphor at all, we have this spiritual battery within us shock-

ing into life our whole spiritual nature. Faith is not a conducting-rod with its foot in the heart, and rising heavenward to catch upon its silvery fingers the electric fluid of divine life that it may pour itself down into the soul, but faith takes hold of Christ as the Life and brings Him down into the soul. Faith is not a pipe conveying the waters of spiritual life to man's seared and thirsty nature through indefinite lengths of evangelical conduit, but faith receives into our spiritual nature, as its full and everlasting supply, Christ, the fountain of living water. This inspiration of God through faith is what we must possess to be alive toward Him. We must lie beneath the vertical burnings of the Sun of Righteousness, as lie the tropics beneath the luminary of day, to be warmed and heated into intense life if we would be drawn unto God and bear fruit unto His glory. We must take Jesus as a spiritual fire into our hearts, to set aglow our cold desires, to enkindle sparks of devotion into live coals, and coals into flames of ceaseless love to God. We must take our encrusted hearts and flay them, tear off from them the dry and hardened layers of deadness, till we reach the quick, and then by faith bind them, all sensi-

tive and quivering, to the living heart of a living Christ, and bid them grow there till Christ and we are one, so that we shall feel in Him every throb of Deity toward us, have thrilling through our spiritual arteries the currents which course his own, and we be made the real partakers of the divine life. Such identity with Christ will cause us to live unto God. What is in us having an affinity for the divine will be drawn forth, what is in us having power to take hold upon the Infinite One will be employed, and what capacity we have for loving and worshipping the Supreme will be filled. This is all-important. Whatever else as Christians we may have, communion with God we must have. Apart from this we are dead Godward. We have no eye to behold His glory, no ear to drink in the minstrelsy of heaven, no sensibility to feel the thrills of infinite love, and no power to send back responses to the touch of God's wondrous grace. This communion is the motive and the source, the secret and the reward, the talisman and the glory of our life toward God. Come then, Lord Jesus, into our souls, and possess them and pervade them with thyself! We would feel that Christ liveth in us beyond the contingency of

removal. You know that Phidias so wrought his own name into the shield of the statue of Minerva, that it could not be removed without destroying his masterpiece. Christ in His children engraves not merely His name, but as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, He interpenetrates their hearts, and dwells there in such essential, vital presence, that His dislodgment would destroy the life and beauty of His people, and leave them withered and loathsome members in their wasting and decay. Here then is the source and guaranty of our life toward God: the constant indwelling of Jesus, who is the incarnation not of the nature alone, but of the truth of God. This is what gave Peter his consuming zeal at Pentecost; Paul his rapture when whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell; John his divine illumination to see that multitude which no man could number; martyrs their calmness and courage amid the crackling of faggots and the curling of flames; missionaries their hope and trust amid the death-damps of the Bassas and the horrors of Oung-pen-la; Christians love and longing to toil and suffer for Jesus, and grace and joy to die in His service like Paul, with the triumph leaping from his quivering lips,

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," taken up eighteen centuries after by Payson on his dying bed, "The battle's fought! The battle's fought! The victory is won! The victory is won forever!" O brethren, brethren, there is no Godward living, no living in the church, no spiritual, no evangelical living, no God-approved working, no brave and no glorious dying, without communion with God through an indwelling Christ as the divine embodiment of all spiritual truth, and as the divine source and authority of all spiritual life. May we feel the uplifting of this divine force in us. By the mystery of the new birth may we all be yielded up again to this inspiration of God, lost by our sinning, but recovered by our believing, and continued by our receiving and appropriating the truth of God through unceasing faith in his Son Jesus Christ.

II. But the Christian is related to man as well as to God. He has another side in whose arteries must bound the flood-tides of life. It cannot be too strongly said that the soul has a man-side, nor, as a counterpart to its spiritual, that it must have Humanitarian Life.

If this statement needed support, it might find it in the nature and purpose of the Gospel. It is true God gave the gospel, and His glory is the final cause of its conquests; but the immediate end of its merciful dispensation is man. The waters of eternal life come issuing clear as crystal from beneath the throne on high, to pour their healing floods over the sin-blasted wastes of humanity. Christ, the Bread of Life, has come down to our race to satisfy the cravings of man's immortality. God opens a fountain in the blood of His Son, but only for the cleansing of polluted human souls. And so we sing, and well we may,

“There is a fountain-filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And SINNERS plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.”

The very drift and spirit of the gospel, therefore, necessitate in its disciples a deep interest in man—an intense life towards man.

If the gospel were an abstraction thrown off from the mind of the Infinite, and hanging in attenuated mystery midway between the heavens and the earth as a target for the sportive religious speculatist, as a transcendental play-

thing, then its followers might be cold and dead in their relations to others, caring only for themselves, and its ministers might be only concerned for their support, their culture, their ambitious longings, and their official investiture. But since the gospel is a vital principle, a spiritual power to arrest and take possession of man, to hold him as an anchor from wrecking on the wild sea of sin, to guide him as a pilot safe to land,—the better land,—and as the ministry and the church, in Christ's name and help, are to fasten the cable into the soul, and throw the fluke into the boiling waters, and are to point the imperilled mariner to the polar-star,—the star of Bethlehem,—they must have not merely a knowledge of man's danger and wants, but a quenchless love for the race. Through the gospel flows God's love to man. The Christian whom God makes its impersonation must also be bound to man by that love which is the essence of the gospel. Christians, not as men simply, but as Christians—followers of Jesus Christ—must be knit into and be grown fast to man in living oneness to do him real good and to answer the demands of God in behalf of the race.

If Christianity were instantaneous or summary in her work, lifting man wholly and at once from self to a high consecration, from sin to holiness, from earth to heaven, by one transcendent final effort, then the church would need at most only a momentary sympathy with mankind. The work over in an instant, the connection might cease, as in the working of the telegraph, in which, when the message flies, the current may be broken. But Christianity is no such extemporizer. She acts with no such summary procedure. She is generally a lifetime in taking man as a rough stone from the quarry of nature up to his place in the finished temple above. The blasting, the rough-hewing, the fine chiselling, the polishing, must be done to fit him for his place in God's spiritual building. And it may be that this rough material must be drawn over plains, up hills and let down mountain ledges, carried over floods and through deep ravines, dragged up shelving rocks and across miry sloughs. How protracted and resolute must be the resistance to these obstacles! When grappled by the divine purpose, to be raised by the derrick of divine power, how will even this lively stone hang heavily toward

earth from its own gravity, and go slowly up the walls of the rising structure! How wide and rough the distance between Pilgrim's first step and the Delectable Mountains! The Slough of Despond, Doubting Castle, Giant Despair, Worldly Wiseman, Mr. Badman, ay, an innumerable host of formidable enemies and perilous places are to be braved and passed. Christianity is a culture, a discipline life-long in its processes of training men for God. Her care is to lead the pilgrim over every step between the City of Destruction and the Celestial City. She ceases not her care till he is safe. And were it not for the ever-present ministries of religion, how many times would man's heart, even after touched by grace, sink within him. The asperities, the trials, the storms of life, all, in the encounter, demand the unwearied services and ministries of religion, and they have them. Religion does not start a man on towards heaven and then leave him to work his passage alone. Her solicitude for him knows no waning, suffers no abatement, till his course is finished and his crown is won. And "Christianity so harmonizes with the intuitions of humanity, so responds to its cravings, supplies its wants, and

rectifies its disorders," that religion scatters innumerable blessings all along our earthly pilgrimage to our home above.

"The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets."

So humanitarian as well as spiritual is religion—and deem not this a doffing of its sanctity—that it provides garments of wool and cotton as well as of righteousness, the needful loaf fresh from the bakery as well as the bread of Life, the golden coin for the needy here, as well as golden streets to be trodden and golden harps to be swept hereafter. Her spirit and mission are to silence the lamentations of earthly sorrow, as well as overarch the heavens with the rainbow of eternal hope, to calm the raging of fever as of passion, to stay the wasting of consumption as of sin, to carry temporal relief to the unfortunate in his hovel, and to the sick soldier in his tent, as the blessings of grace to their souls.

As is the Gospel of Christ, so must be the disciples of Christ. The gospel having for its practical work the salvation of man, furnishing

him checks and balances, hindrances and incentives ; strength to draw him up the hills of difficulty, and restraints to hold him from ruinous precipitancy down the steepes of worldliness ; inspiration to sustain him amid the heats and languor of the deserts of trial, and before the frowning pinnacles of opposition ; prudence to shun the eddies of luxurious gayety, and to hold him back from the thundering Niagaras of a huge and defiant sensuality ; also grace adapted to every phase of experience, to be his companion along every step of his journey ; pliant, stooping to supply every want and reaching upward to color every joy ; ubiquitous and plastic, making everything minister to man's religious culture, discipline and success ; triumphant, administering an abundant entrance into eternal life : the gospel having also a more strictly humane work to do for man as man, to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to minister to the sick, to visit the prisoner, to lift up the bowed down, to proclaim liberty to the captive, to give in the name of a disciple the cup of cold water ; all this being its mission and its work, the spirit of the gospel compels in the church an all-embracing humanitarianism. This humanitarian element

in Christianity must determine what we mean by humanitarian life in the Christian, and must give peculiarity to a Christian's sympathy with man. Preëminently must the Christian be bound to man in a oneness so total as to make the burden another feels his own, every obstacle which another encounters his own, every joy which delights another his own, every triumph in which another glories his own, and every ill and every woe which afflict and sadden the race his own. The disciples of our blessed Lord in whom such a gospel dwells, must have, and must feel this oneness with man, with humanity, this peculiar and comprehensive community of interest with the race, which is the outgrowth of the gospel and a necessary expression of its spirit. Surely the church must have a living man-side.

But Christ dwelling in the hearts of His people as the truth defining their relations to man is required to give this humanitarian life. Did it ever occur to you that the burden of Scripture teaching concerning Christ is in reference to His humanity? That His sympathy with man is more fully revealed, if possible, than his oneness with God? If the humanitarian elements of His nature are not more the subject of revela-

tion than the strictly divine, to say the least, the humane character of Jesus, both by didactic utterance and practical example, is set forth in the Scriptures with signal emphasis. He is embodied Divinity, but no less embodied Humanity. Is He not bound to man by a vital sympathy, bound to him by the necessities of his nature as the God-Man? I must not stop to array proofs of this. It is needless. The amazing fact of the incarnation alone proves it. In that sublime stooping of the Son of God, once and forever He became one with the race. I shall not point you to the sick chambers of Judea and Galilee, to the tombs of their dead, to the homes of their sad ones, to the imperilled on the sea and the despairing on the land, nor to Gethsemane, to

“Bring that thrilling scene
Home to thine inmost soul,”

nor yet to Calvary, where

“Upon the cross He hung, and bowed the head,
And prayed for them that smote and them that curst,”

for all these are weak indications of His humanity compared with the staggering, overwhelming fact of His becoming man at all. Bethlehem,

the stable, the manger! Here is the wonder! Once man, we may infer all that follows, as did the shepherds in their songs of jubilee. Humanity once assumed by our Divine Redeemer, we are prepared to believe without practical demonstration what the intuition of the shepherds seemed to catch as the inspiration of their tuneful strains, that every element of His being was alive to man, every fibre of his soul was grown to the race; that He would bend His shoulders beneath the heavy load of sin and woe to lift it off from a crushed humanity; that He would go through the world like a current of vital air, and as a dazzling sun to chase away the malarious night-shades of sin, and send a glowing life over the drear and desolate domain of death; that in love and pity, prostrate at the feet of mankind, He would heave His Godlike heart, and throb out in that bitter garden great drops of bloody sweat, and then expire upon the cross amid a baptism of agony and blood for a world of guilty sinners! My brethren, my brethren, such a Christ living incarnate in us, as our type and life-source, must send the life of His humanity streaming through all our arteries. Without embodying and appropriating the hu-

manity of Jesus as our example and life-spring, without being pervaded and saturated with this humane life by an indwelling Jesus, we are fearfully defective as Christians. We are dead to the great interests committed to our care by our Divine Master. Nothing can supply this radical want but Christ living in us, as the Truth and the Life, linking us to man, and making us wholly and intensely alive toward him.

We talk of a church, and especially of a ministry largely possessed of godliness, powerfully informed and charged with God, as the only desideratum in our evangelizing instrumentalities. If by the term godliness we mean only what is piety in a strict sense, love to God ; and if we mean by the term God only the Theistic nature, we teach an erroneous doctrine. But if we mean by these terms God in Christ, the God-Man, uniting the divine and the human in His nature, and Christliness, embracing love to man as well as love to God, we declare the most important truth ever uttered concerning the means of gathering the nations to Shiloh. A church with no humanity, with no oneness with the race, that embraces only a system of abstract doctrines, a dry and clattering creed, a set of

dôgmas made up of hard and naked theological vertebræ, with ribs and members all jointed, proportioned, and complete, and stalking through our world only as a ghastly spectacle, and not as a divine and human force to lead man up to his possible destiny as an immortal being; a church having no interest to follow man along through the dangers of his spiritual way, and having no loving, longing heart to apply the alleviative virtues, or, in medical phrase, the pharmacopœia of the gospel to the varied ills and sorrows of life, to the moral diseases which imperil, the vices which pollute, the crimes which blacken, and the woes and burdens which crush the soul and the body, is not a gospel church; for Christ, of whose overflowing and kindly humanity the gospel is but a transcript, cannot dwell in such a church. Let me be understood. A church without a sympathy wide and enduring as mankind, one with no life manward, with no feelings of love yearning over man as man, and as we find him, varied by climate, color, caste, culture, character, or by any possible condition; such a church, however sound in doctrine and pious in heart, supposing such an impossibility possible, is a gospelless because a Christless church. Human-

ity is not what a Christian may have, but an essential he must have. To feel or not to feel with man and for man is not optional with a follower of the divinely humane Jesus. Jesus and His gospel are alike freighted and overflowing with love to man. So must be the Christian who is the representative of Christ and the impersonation of His gospel. O for an indwelling Jesus in our souls, that we may gather these gushing humanities fresh and warm from his glowing love into our own cold and selfish hearts, that, for the race for which he gave up all, and to which, on His account, we owe so much, our life may pour itself out in offerings full, melting, and sublime. We must not be afraid of pressing upon the church and upon her ministers this crowning necessity of humanitarian life. We must press it as an absolutely indispensable feature of Christian character. We must press it as an essential condition of usefulness. We must press it to preserve the equilibrium or healthful balancing of the spiritual and the humane in the Christian, as these blend in Christ his great archetype. Nay, more, we must press the necessity of humanitarian life as a coequal glory of the church, coequal with spiritual life. Let the time speed-

ily come when the world shall be blessed with such a church, reaching up to God and taking hold of Him by faith and love, and reaching out to man and taking hold of him by the sympathies of common joy and common suffering and common wants and common hopes, and living to both by the inspiration and indwelling of our divine and human Redeemer.

So essential is this blending of love to God and interest in man in the christian character, that Christ has declared that the decisions of the judgment shall turn on this question of humanitarian life, it being implied, of course, that where all care for man is wanting, there can be no true love to God. So much importance does our Lord attach to this subject, that He transfers His personal claim upon his followers, as to their ministry of kindness, to the hungry and thirsty, naked and sick, neglected and imprisoned, of all ages and climes, and declares that relief to these is attention to Him, and neglect of these is neglect of Him. Our Lord most certainly and most solemnly teaches that at the Grand Assize which He describes in this connection, He shall say respectively to those on His right hand and to those on his left hand, "Come, ye blessed

of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ;" and, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," as they have tendered or withheld the offices of humanity.

III. Having endeavored to show how an indwelling Christ, as the embodiment of all Christian truth, gives birth and sustenance to spiritual and humanitarian life in the Christian, it only remains for me to consider the relation of an immanent Saviour to Practical Life. We have been speaking of views and feelings in reference to God and man, but now we propose to speak of duty to both.

The Church is commissioned to do a great work. It is to bring the gospel into saving contact with men's souls in all the variety of their condition. It is to strive to convert men. It is to strive to save them after they are converted. It is to apply the truth so as to perpetuate the life of religion in the soul, to conserve purity in the character, and to secure consistency in the conduct of the Christian. The Church, through the power of the truth, is to stifle vice, consume lust, rebuke crime, and

expel every thing from the individual or community which endangers the welfare of man. We are to teach and illustrate by our lives the truth which another has so well spoken, that "religion is not a work apart by itself, but a spirit of faith and righteousness, flowing out from the centre of a regenerated heart into all the employments and intercourse of the world. Not merely the preacher in the pulpit and the saint on his knees may do the work of religion, but the mechanic who smites with the hammer and drives the wheel, the artist seeking to realize his pure ideal of the beautiful, the mother in the gentle offices of home, the statesman in the forlorn hope of liberty and justice, and the philosopher whose thought treads reverently among the splendid mysteries of the universe." We must deem this no secularization of religion, no desecration of its holy nature. Its Divine Author poured the gospel as a benign power into the heart of society as it existed, to permeate its masses, to consecrate its activities, to bridle and rein into a worthier service its foaming passions, to lift it up to a higher plane of civic and secular, as well as of moral and religious life, and, in short, to crown it with a better, even

a Christian civilization. To conserve its sacredness, religion must not be divorced from any laudable interest of man. It sublimely demonstrates its divinity by tenderly caring for all human interests, and by subjecting them to its mission of salvation. It has been quaintly but truly said, that "religion must not be made an isolated peculiarity for the corner of the closet and a fraction of the week, leaving all the rest of time and space an unconsecrated waste, where lawless passions travel and selfishness pitches its tents." The Church must show, by a fearless and luminous advocacy of the truth, and by a practical demonstration in its life, that religion has a rightful and necessary affinity with every interest of man, temporal as well as eternal, that it imperiously demands the consecration of all his pursuits to itself, and that it must live in his every duty in controlling censorship as a mighty and authoritative power.

It must be perceived that if such be the work of the Church, it must have the spirit and facility of adaptation to its sublime mission. It must rigidly discriminate as to the wants and as to the appliances which will best meet the demands of a given case. For example, sinners,

according to their temperament, culture, habits, associations, character, are to be differently approached, and by considerations which will best meet their respective peculiarities. They are to be taken to Sinai or Calvary, to hear the thunders of the law or the melting strains of compassionate tenderness; to the plains of Sodom or to the plains of Bethlehem, to witness the doom of the godless or to listen to the songs of the angels; down to woe or up to bliss, to hear the wailings of despair or the chorus of the redeemed. They are to hear John's "Repent," Paul's "Believe," and Jesus' "Follow me." Motives of love, motives of glorious destiny, motives of fear are to be presented. Exhortations, rebukes, encouragements, arguments, instruction, appeals, are to be employed. Words of tenderness and words of severity, but all in love, are to be spoken. Varied phases of the truth are to be set forth to fit the varied conditions of men, but all this to bring them to Jesus. And yet but one gospel is to be preached, a gospel unique and glorious—Christ crucified. But let us remember that Christ crucified is not preached until that stupendous fact, expounded and applied up to the capacity and demands of

its essential nature as God's method of salvation, is brought to touch and rule all the interests of the individual and the community. I believe that there is much of—I will not say cant, for that might seem unkind—but of defective understanding of the truth, in the often-repeated, and, perhaps, pious platitudes of ministers about preaching nothing but “Christ and Him crucified,” and of churches, that they want to hear nothing but the “gospel;” thus narrowing these terms down from their infinite fulness and from the solemn vastness of their application, to a line of meaning which shall leave the selfish desires and worldly purposes of men undisturbed. Alas! would that we did preach, and that men did hear proclaimed Christ and Him crucified, in all the fulness and greatness of this glorious doctrine. Christ and Him crucified is a generic term, or, rather, is a condensed expression for a vast system of truths and principles which are to be brought out, proclaimed, interwoven into all the intercourse of daily life, laid in as salt between all the corrupting folds of depraved human nature, interpenetrating all the coiling, tangled, knotted relations of human society, and projected, in vital volley, as by

heavy artillery, into all ranks hostile to human welfare for time or eternity. The Apostle Paul, who knew nothing but Christ and Him crucified, interpreted the doctrine thus widely. There was no conceivable human exigency which the gospel in his hand did not meet. There was no sin which the gospel under his application did not condemn. There was no good which the gospel in his possession did not encourage.

Listen to his preaching to Felix. He reasoned with that ruler as to righteousness, temperance and a judgment to come. He condemned his political administration, he chastised his personal habits, and endeavored to reform him in both respects by citing him to his personal accountability to God. Is it too much to demand of all ministers and of all Christians that by practical efforts they make this gospel touch the soul and the life at all the points of their need and their peril?

To do this work, Christians need an ability to use all the means which God has furnished to their hands. Not every one, for that is impossible, but as a community, they are to range over the realms of learning and research. They

are to know history, literature, science, art, as well as have an experience of the treasures of infinite grace, and are to bring all these resources to the elucidation and enforcement of the gospel upon men. They are to be cognizant of all those current events, local and general, civil and social, secular and religious, which, though they may be trivial in themselves, contain the practical lessons which we need to know, and which are often the phenomena which indicate great principles. The church must keep pace with the world. In the restlessness of mind, in the ever varying phases of society, in the majestic march of civilization, results are reached, facts are brought out, systems are perfected, discoveries are made, wants are developed, which are ever furnishing new work for the gospel and new facilities for its application. I have no sympathy with the cry for "a church for the times," as that language is generally understood. This demand as commonly pleaded is without profitable significance. The enforcement of such a statement, I think, usually proceeds upon the false assumption that the times are to give peculiarity to the church or to the Christians of our age. But not so. The church is not to take its

texture and hue and movement from the times, but from the gospel, which is ever pressing it up to the times, not to be controlled by them, but to control them. Electricity, steam and war are not to change the church as to activity, directness, earnestness, but the practical nature of the gospel, urging the church to supply the wants of the age as indicated by these agencies of civilization, gives it the required facility for its new work. The times do not say to Christians, "come;" no, they rather say, "stay back;" but the gospel says "go," and Christ says "go," lay hold of these new opportunities of usefulness, occupy these new places of Christian effort which the times open up. This practical life in the church, while not touching its sanctity, will strip the gospel of its vagueness and technicality, and cause it to be spoken in fresh and earnest language to the consciences of men as affected by time and circumstance. A church that is practically alive to its legitimate work of giving the gospel to the world in the vast variety of its applicability to human condition and need, will always be a church for the times.

This practical life needed by the Christian

which sees the work to be done, and then does it by all the means which God has furnished, finds its absolute impersonation in Christ, and is realized in the soul only as He dwells there as the Truth and the Life. When upon earth, He fully exemplified the necessity of carrying the gospel into all the affairs of daily life, of pitting it against all evils, and of making it man's help in all exigencies. He brought its evangelical and saving elements, and its humanities as well, into contact with man as he found him. He enforced its principles and duties by current events. He did not in this mean to give us stereotyped illustrations, but to teach us the great truth that Christians are to be thoroughly alive to things around them, and are to make them available for good. Had He sojourned in our time, He would probably have employed different events to show the value of the gospel and to make it effective. He would have encouraged different classes, and have levelled His rebukes at different sins. All we mean to say is, He was intensely practical in His life, and developed most perfectly the divine and the human in the gospel. And this practical, working Christ, living in His people by faith, is

the cause and the pledge, the sealing and the crowning of their impersonation of the practical, working spirit of Christianity. With Jesus in the soul to teach us what to do for God and man, and how to do it, and to inspire us in our work, we shall be soundly honest and terribly earnest. There is a wide distinction between solid Christian wisdom and flippant wordly policy in the church. The one is the fruit of an indwelling Christ, and exalts us. The other degrades us and can not coexist in the same character with Jesus. "Of that prudence which is akin to selfishness, of that discretion which leans to craft, of that candor which tends to undue pliancy, of that wisdom which is sensual and earthly, the Christian does not need the slightest tincture." But what an illustrious orator said of his contemporary statesman, "his virtues are his arts," ought to be true of every disciple of Jesus. It is true of every one in whom Jesus dwells as a living, practical force. Christ in his people as a working power, stirring their depths of thought, sweeping their chords of feeling, touching as by heavenly fire their springs of action, and binding them to God and to man by the glowing weldings of faith and love, must

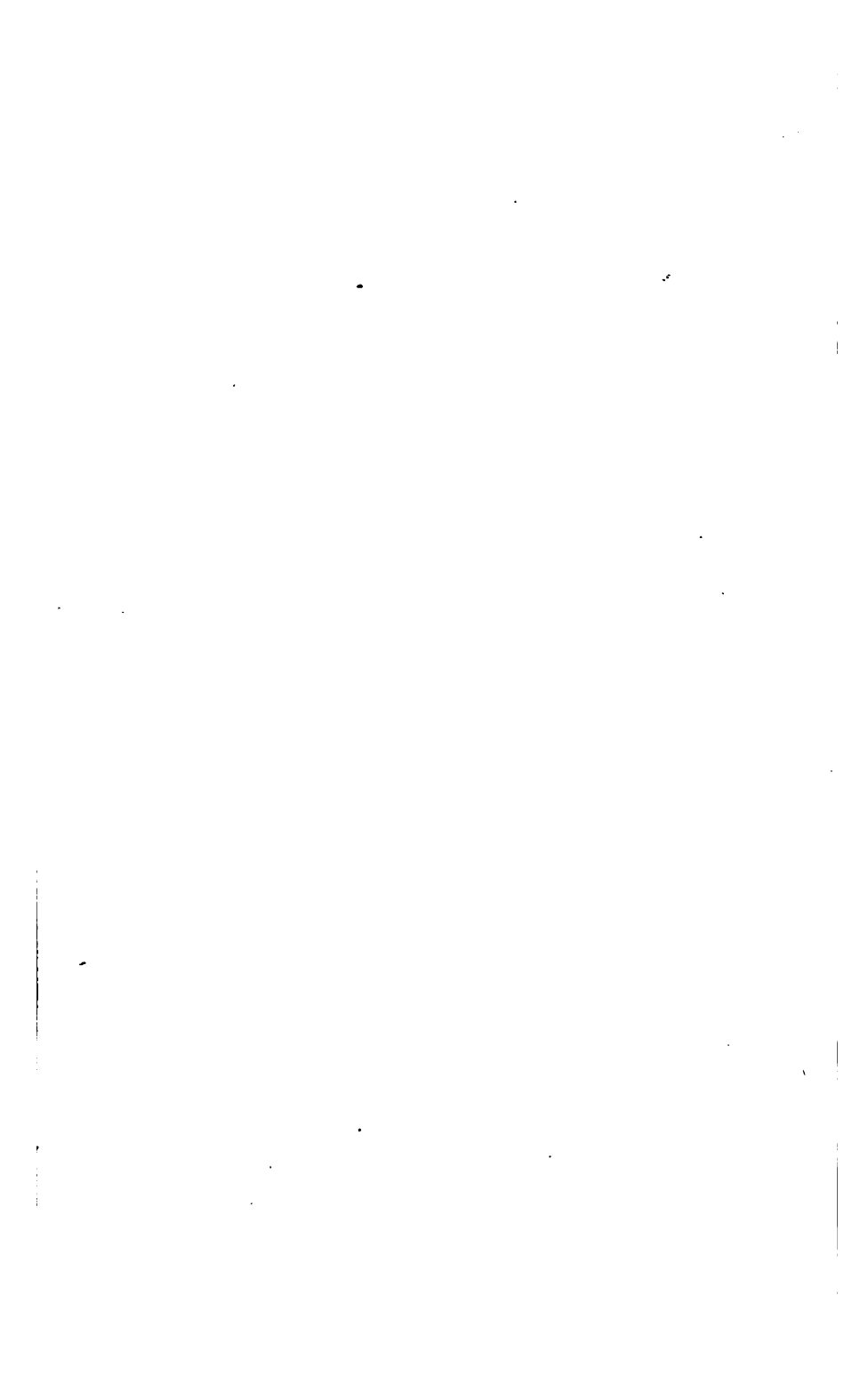
give them a life whose scope, purpose, and intensity must lay hold of and concentrate everything upon the stupendous work of the gospel in our guilty world. But a church without Christ in it, is a dead and decaying body buried in its own corruption, and itself the whited sepulchre of a world's hopes.

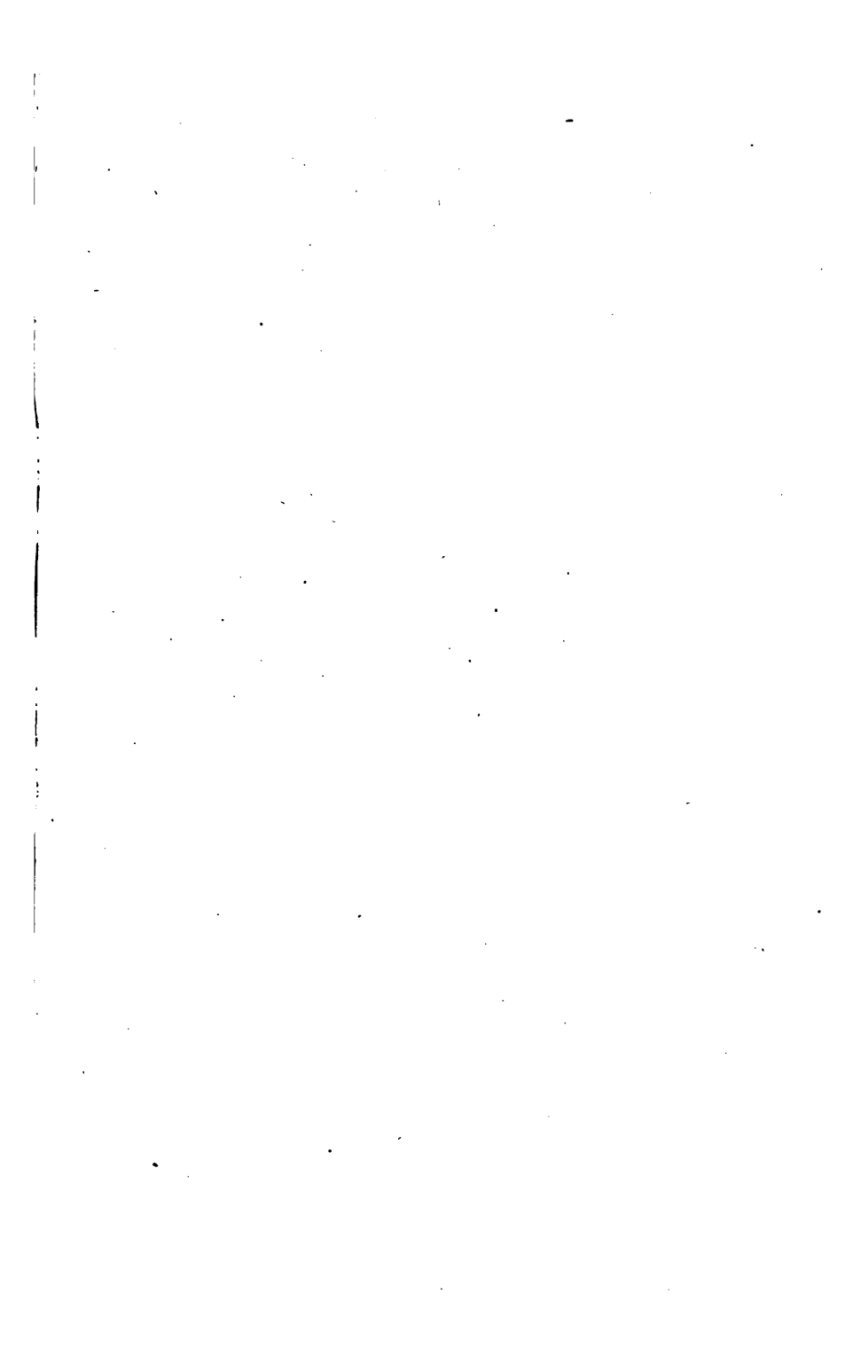
Let a man realize as only he can when a supernatural Redeemer touches and rouses the latent and dormant energies of his soul, that he is a sinner, immortal and accountable; that God is a Sovereign, infinite and eternal; that Christ is a Saviour, mighty and willing; that the Spirit is a Regenerator, personal and present; that Eternity is a Reality, rewarding and retributive, and a life is evolved from death, to which these doctrines shall forever give repose, solemnity, depth, strength, glow, movement, grandeur, a sense of infinite responsibility and an awful interest. But none of these sublime truths are poured into the soul from without, but they spring up in the soul by the inspiration of God, by Christ's living in us the hope of glory. By Him-as the Truth and the Life in us, we know these verities; nay more, we feel these blessed doctrines incorporated with our experience, and

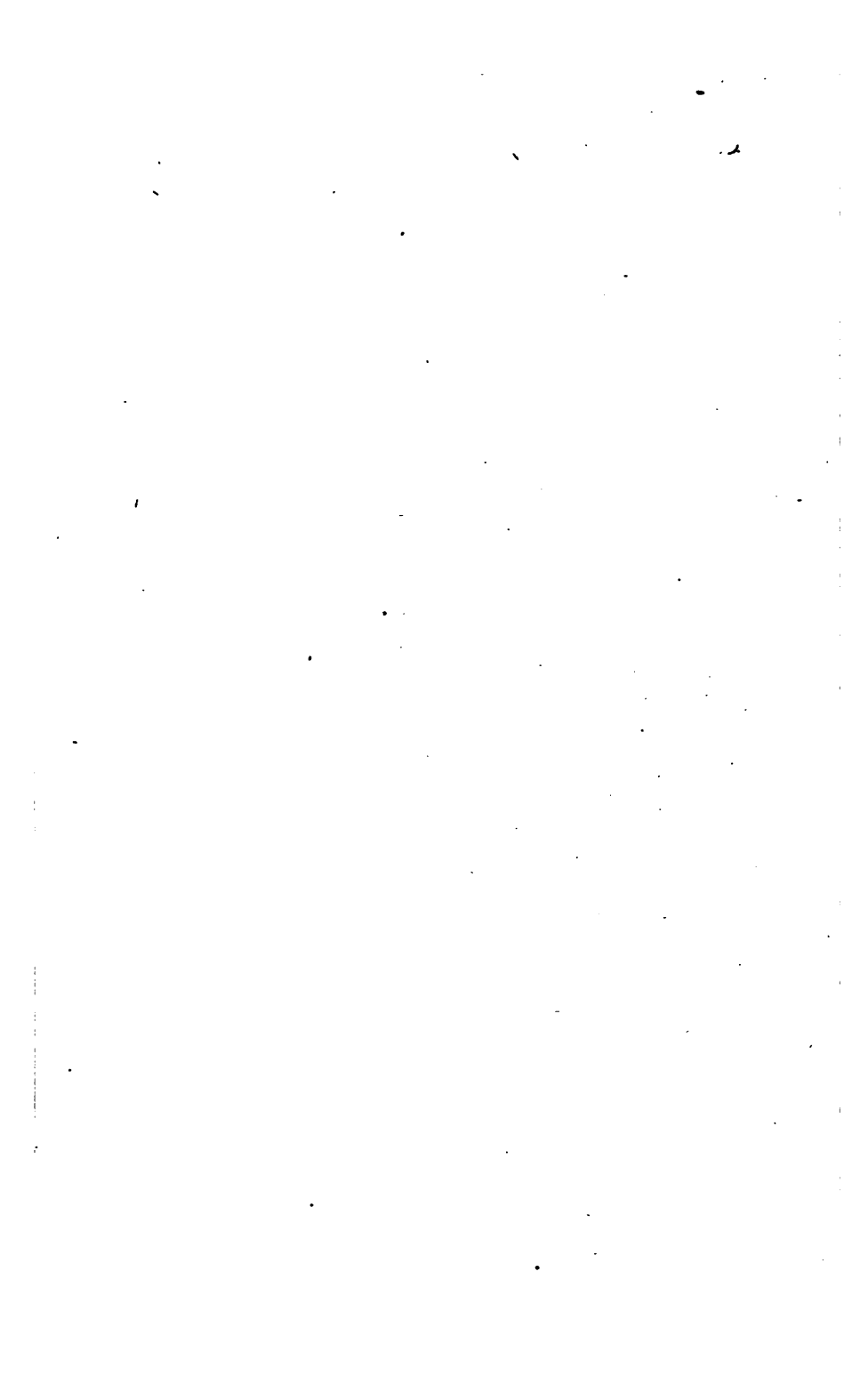
lifting our souls to heights of life and hope and love and faith, from which we see

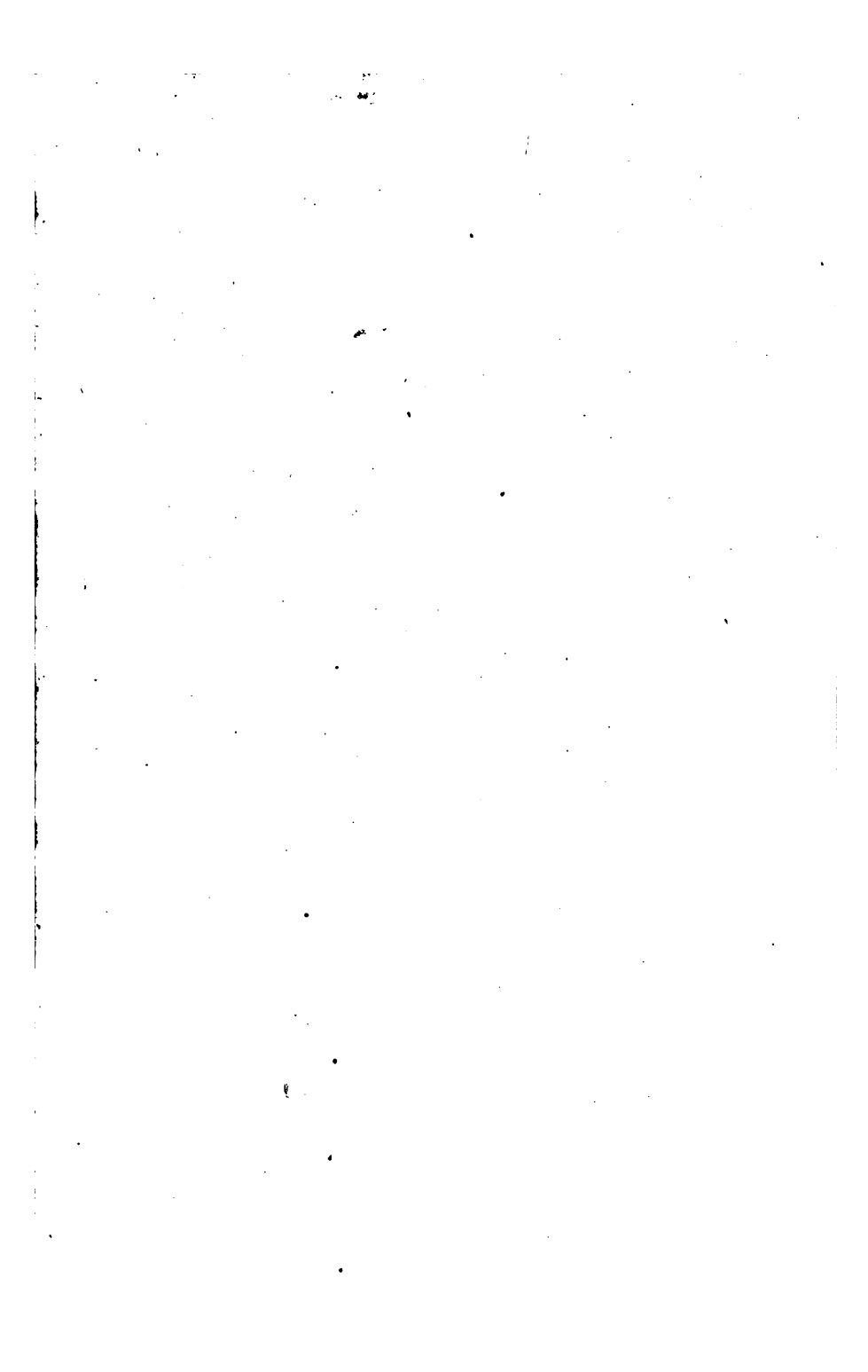
“The land upon the blissful shore,
There rests no shadow, falls no stain;
Where those who meet shall part no more,
And those long parted meet again.”

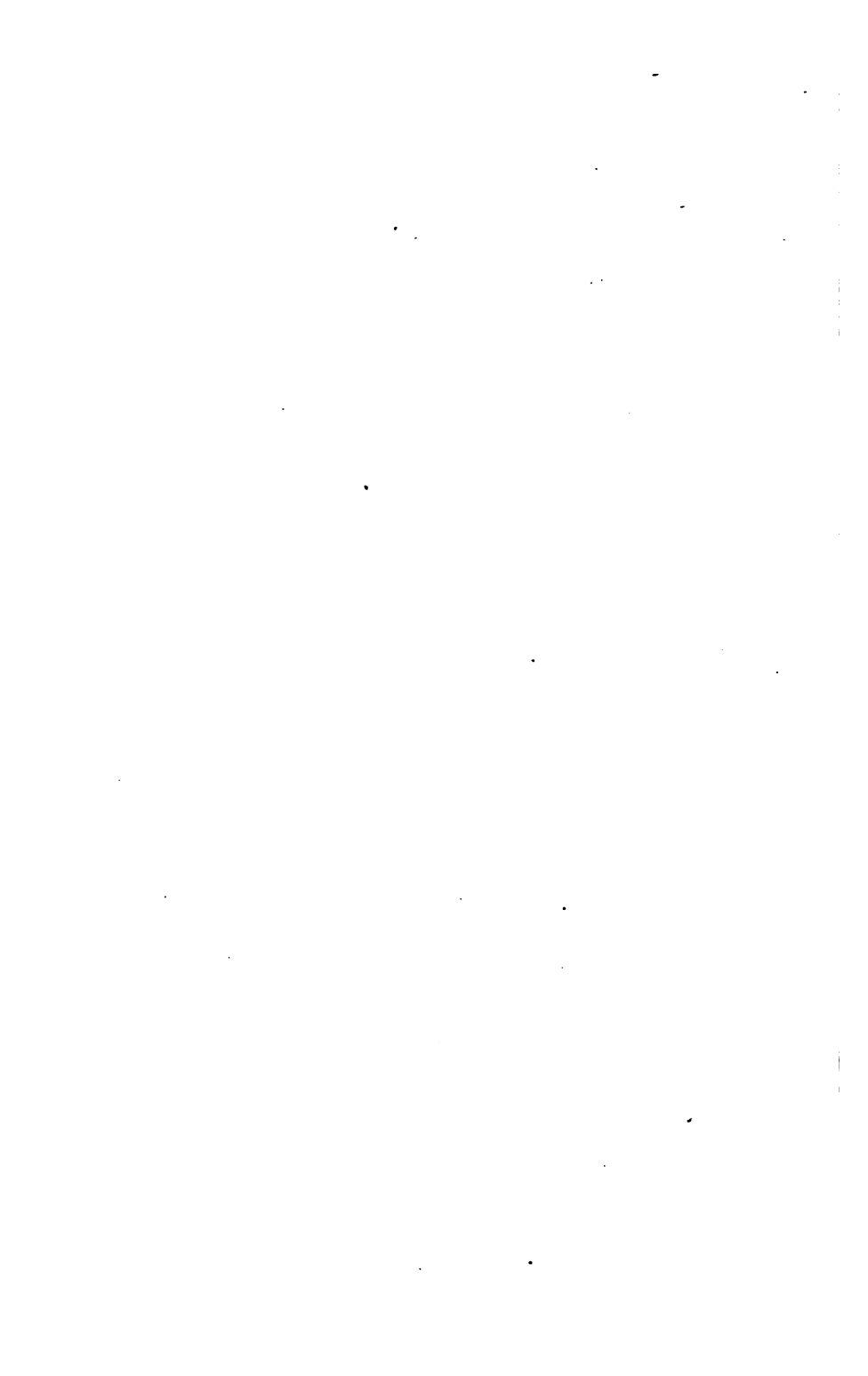
Jesus alone, who loved us and gave himself for us, shall bring these great life-giving doctrines into our souls with Himself, and shall sweep us along up and around that shining spiral of truth and life which is the highway to glory for all His saints, and of which He is the foundation, the substance, and the crown. Blessed is the man whose life is kindled by such a flame, lifted by such a power, and crowned with such a glory.

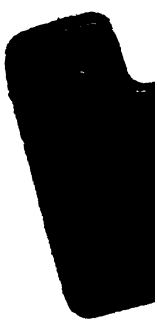












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